

# Living with a Demon

by LALALALOVEmee

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Summary: Under certain circumstances, Chizuru now lives with Kazama, the school's student council president who also happens to be her childhood friend? Sort of based on Hakuouki SSL. \*THEY START LIVING TOGETHER IN THE LATER CHAPTERS.

## 1. Oneshot

Hello! This is my second fanfiction~ I really love Hakuouki and I actually bought the North American release of the game. If you liked the anime and you haven't bought the game yet, I suggest you do! It's pretty fun and there are just so many different possibilities of endings you can get. It's definitely worth your money. :)

Anyway, my first fanfiction was based on Vampire Knight's Rima and Shiki. If you happen to like those two as a pair, I would appreciate it if you would try out my collection of oneshots that I have on them! It would help a lot if you could tell me how I could improve or simply what you liked about it~

I tried writing a Hakuouki fanfiction, but my impression of the ones I've read so far is that they are all written with the finest details. I'm afraid mine cannot even compare to those that I've read, but I tried anyway. By the way, this is a oneshot that gives you a taste of how the actual story will go like. The real first chapter begins in the next chapter. I hope you enjoy my take on things~

**\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki or any of its properties. \*\***

\* \* \*

><p>"Kazama-san, please wake up. It's already 7! Don't you have a student council meeting to attend to today?" Chizuru lifted the blanket to discover a flipped over Kazama who was still not quite ready to wake up yet.<p>

"Mmmâ€|" he groaned upon contact with the sunlight which has now reached even the darkest corners of his room. Chizuru had made sure that the blinds were completely drawn back so the sunlight could reach even the demon of the household.

"I made breakfast, so please prepare for school," Chizuru patted his shoulder, begging him to wake up. Suddenly, a strong yet slender hand gripped onto her arm and pulled her down onto the bed. Startled, Chizuru found herself under Kazama's body with her head now on the soft, comfy pillow that his head was previously lying on.

"You're so noisy. You have no right to tell me what to do," he muttered lazily, as if he was drunk, "just let me sleep a little longer." With those final words, he fell on Chizuru and curled his arms around her, using her body as a pillow.

"Kazama-san!"

No reply. Chizuru tried squirming under his hold, but she made no progress. Sighing, she looked at Kazama's sleeping form and surrendered to his embrace.

\* \* \*

><p>"<em>If you ever want me to do something and I decline, call me by my name and I will accept," Kazama told her one evening while he was walking her home. At that time, she hadn't even been living with Kazama yet, but he was still quite kind to her. He had treated her delicately compared to the way he treated everyone else. It had made her feel special. <em>

"\_Um... does that apply to anything?" \_

"\_Within a reasonable range, of course," Kazama smiled, knowing where she was going with this.\_

"\_Alright. I just need to call your name, right? Like, Kazama-san?"

\_

"\_First name."\_

"\_What? I can't possibly do that!" Kazama came from a prestigious family. To call him without "sama" was hard enough for her, although under his request, she had submitted to calling him Kazama-san.

\_

"\_You don't have to now, but when there comes a time where you need my help with something, I will gladly help you if you say it properly."\_

\* \* \*

><p>That's it! All she had to do was call out his first name!<p>

"Chiâ€|"

At the sound of the first syllable, Kazama looked up. Chizuru's face was now a deep rosy colour from embarrassment, but apparently, Kazama

found this amusing. Right away, he knew what she was up to.

"What is it, Chizuru? If you don't say it properly, I won't give in," he teased.

Chizuru looked away and attempted again, however she didn't get any farther than the first syllable.

"Hmâ€| boring," Kazama sighed. Before Chizuru could comment, her lips were captured by a strong, yet passionate force. She tried to push his body away, but her strength was useless; he was too strong for her. The sounds of their lips brushing against each other filled the room and her ears, which made Chizuru blush even more. As seconds passed, Kazama still had no intention of releasing her. He stared at her face as she made tiny gasps between their kisses for air. He had to admit that she was indeed very adorable. Although he let her take bits of air, he never let her take too much; too much time would go to waste. Chizuru was now gasping for air which earned a smirk from the male, a smirk that could be felt through their lips.

He finally let her go and Chizuru immediately dropped limp on his bed.

"Thanks for the morning kiss," he licked his lips, an action that sent chills down Chizuru's back, "...but I have to say, you sure are weak at kissingâ€| shall I train you?" She could hear his teasing tone through her loud and desperate breaths. She looked up at the mocking figure and silently pleaded that he would not do anymore to her. He laughed, a sound that was both frightening and beautiful.

He waited until she recovered from the lack of oxygen before continuing.

"I'm going back to sleep, unless there's something you want to say," he eyed her, giving her a chance to speak.

"Chiâ€|Chikageâ€|" Chizuru whispered.

"What was that? I couldn't hear properly," he smiled teasingly.

"â€|Please get readyâ€|for schoolâ€|Chikageâ€|" she said with more confidence this time. He chuckled and stood up, walking towards the washroom to get ready.

"â€|samaâ€|" she mumbled afterwards.

\* \* \*

><p>Well, that's it! Please tell me what you think about this chapter! I accept negative and positive reviews as I believe I can benefit from both. Please and thank you~<p>

P.S. Thank you so much for the help, \*\*Pandora's Socks\*\* (ID)!

## 2. Chapter 1

Hey guys! Well, exams aren't over yet... I still have 2 more, but I just had to update! First of all, thank you to all who read the

oneshot of this story! Thanks to those who reviewed as well!  
Secondly, sorry for the long wait, but this chapter is the official first chapter. Please read it and tell me what you think by reviewing~!

**\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki or its characters, however all original characters are mine. \*\***

\* \* \*

><p>"<em>Mommy! Daddy! You're back! How was your trip?" a little girl, not much older than the age of seven, bounced up and down in excitement at the sight of her parents. <em>

"\_Yes, sweetie. Guess what we got you?" a beautiful woman with brown hair, a colour similar to the young girl's hair, questioned her. She slowly pulled out a small package out of her purse, smiling as the young girl's eyes lit up. \_

"\_A souvenir? Oh, mommy, daddy, I love you!" she ran up to her parents and gave each of them a big hug, impatiently eying the package as she did so. Her father chuckled.\_

"\_Don't worry about us. Why don't you open up your present first?" At the sound of the invitation, she eagerly nodded her head and proceeded to opening the package. Layers and layers of cherry blossom-designed wrapping paper later, she found a small box. Opening the box, she found a silver bracelet full of cherry blossom flowers.

\_

"\_Dad and I know how much you love flowers, especially cherry blossoms. We thought this bracelet would match you."\_

"\_With this, I hope you'll forgive usâ€|"\_"

Chizuru woke up to find her eyes tightly glued shut by something wet. It didn't take long for her to realize that she had been crying in her sleep. Taking her hands up to her eyes, she started rubbing them slowly in an attempt to erase the fatigue. When most of the tears had been wiped dry, she opened her eyes and stared up at the ceiling, thinking about the dream, or nightmare, that she just had\_. "With this, I hope you'll forgive usâ€|"\_" Her father's face as he said this line was painful to look at, but she couldn't get it out of her mind. Every night, she would have nightmares haunting her about her past, about her family leaving her. Every night, someone, whether it was her mother or father, would offer her something in hopes that she would forgive them.

"I already forgive youâ€|" she mumbled quietly, although no one would complain even if she spoke out loud as she lives alone. With nothing else to do, she decided to look around the room although she quickly thought it pointless to search around since she couldn't see much due to the darkness. She turned to the side to take a quick glance at the clock, noticing that it was only 1PM. She sighed; it was going to be a long night.

Waking up was always easy for her, although she couldn't say the same about falling asleep. Still, every night, she had to make sure she went to sleep early enough to wake up for school. Getting out of bed at exactly 7AM, she hopped towards the bathroom which was, luckily,

only a few paces away. There were never any obstacles in the way between her room and the bathroom, as she didn't have many belongings. The door was kept open at all times since she lived alone and she didn't have a need to really close the door either. Besides, her room needed fresh air, so opening the windows and doors really helped the circulation of the air in her room.

The daily routine was to brush her teeth, wash her face, put on her uniform, comb her hair, and then go to the kitchen to grab a quick breakfast. Her breakfast included a small glass of milk and a piece of bread every day. When she ran out of bread, she would move on to energy bars or anything to keep her at least partially full. Lunch was often a slice of bread as well. She carefully packed her bread in a small plastic bag and stuffed it in her school bag. Putting on her shoes, she grabbed her keys and double checked to see if she was missing any of her homework assignments.

"I'm going now," she called out to nobody and she wasn't expecting an answer either. In fact, it would be kind of creepy right now if someone did answer. After all, she had been living by herself for almost ten years now. Hearing a reply now would just be weird. She opened the door and stepped out into the sunlight, bathing in the sun in comfort for a few seconds before realizing that her door was still open. Closing it, she locked the door carefully and checked to make sure it was indeed locked. After all, when you live in such a rundown place, you never know when the lock might stop working. Slowly, she started dragging her feet to school. She didn't want to go to school as there was no one there waiting for her, but she needed the education. She planned to go to one of the top schools in the area, in hopes of not having to pay for the rest of her education. That thought alone kept her going all these years.

\* \* \*

><p>"Chizuru! Did you finish yesterday's homework?" a classmate, who she has never heard from before, came up to her desk. She examined the girl who stood in front of her. She has never made much of an impression on Chizuru, but she often saw her staring at her at times. "Um, y-yes," she stuttered, unsure of whether to tell the truth or not. If she told the truth, the student would ask her if she could copy off of her or not. If she lied, everyone would eventually find out and call her a liar. She would rather let her classmates copy off of her than have them call her names.<p>

"Really? That's great! Well, then again, when have you never finished your homework?" the classmate laughed. Chizuru just smiled, wondering if that was a compliment or not. "So, mind if I copy?" There it was. The question that she has heard over and over again, yet she still could not find the courage to say no to it. "Sure thing."

The bell rang, signaling that half of the day was over and that it was lunch time. Chizuru took her lunch out and began to eat when a group of classmates walked up to her. She immediately noticed that the girl who had asked to copy her notes earlier was part of the group. "Hey, Chizuru! Thanks for helping before! Wanna eat lunch with us?" the girl smiled genuinely at her, a smile that has long been forgotten from Chizuru's mind. Chizuru immediately beamed and nodded eagerly, standing up and joining the group.

All the way to the rooftop, where they were planning to eat their

lunches, the group of girls chatted among themselves and introduced each other to Chizuru. By the time they got to the top, Chizuru had already memorized all their names and faces. She couldn't believe that they were in the same class the whole time, yet she has never talked to them before! Risa, the girl who she had helped before, motioned for Chizuru to sit beside her.

>"Chizuru, what's with that small lunch? Are you on a diet? No fair! You're already so skinny! Hmph, I'm going on a diet too!" A bunch of the girls they were sitting with started laughing at Risa and telling her that it was clearly impossible for her.<br>"What? It's not impossible! I can do anything as long as I put my mind to it! Right, Chizuru?" she gestured at Chizuru, who gave a determined look.

>"Yes, Risa-san! I'm sure you can do it!"<br>"Enough with the honorifics! Just call me Risa!" she patted Chizuru on the back lightly, "ah! That's right! Since I'm on a diet now, you can have some of my lunch!" Chizuru was shocked and tried her best to reject her kind offer, however Risa insisted desperately. In the end, Chizuru gave up and ended up taking some of Risa's lunch in shame. "Don't feel bad! I'm on a diet now anyway! And besides, think of it as thanks for the help from before!" Risa looked at Chizuru and gave her a reassuring face. Chizuru wasn't stupid. She knew that Risa knew about her living conditions and how every day, she couldn't afford a proper lunch. In fact, Risa had always wanted to talk to Chizuru, but she knew how Chizuru didn't like to owe people. Using the homework excuse as a reason, Risa felt relieved that she was able to help Chizuru out even if it was a tiny thing. Chizuru understood all this, but she didn't tell her. She only ate the food Risa gave her and said a simple "thanks" in gratitude.

\* \* \*

><p>"DON'T TELL ME, CHIZURU! IT'S A CUCUMBER!"<p>

"No, Risa! It's a zucchini!"

"Oh! IS THAT A ZUCCHINI TOO?"

"No! that's a cucumber!"

" 'DA FLIP? THEY ALL LOOK THE SAME!"

"Be quiet, Risa!" the home economics teacher yelled out at her students.

"Sensei, you should be quiet too," a student responded to their teacher's sudden outburst.

Laughter, along with bickering, could be heard from all the way across the hallway. Class has never been more fun. It's been a few months since Chizuru met Risa and her group of friends. It all started with the usual question of "can I copy your homework?" Risa, however, was different. She asked Chizuru, not because she actually wanted to copy her homework, but to help her. It was weird, but Risa understood Chizuru, maybe even better than she understood herself.

"The end of the year's coming!" Nana, one of Chizuru's new friends, commented as soon as the classroom quieted down.

"Yeah, that mean's graduation's coming soonâ€|" Risa agreed with her. For once, Risa looked sad and kind ofâ€| lonely.

"Don't worry! Even if we all go to different schools, we can still contact each other and meet up!" Chizuru said, hoping to cheer everyone up. They all looked at Chizuru and then at each other. Slowly, warm smiles began to fold on everyone's faces.

"You know, Chizuru, you've changed," Risa commented.

"Eh? How so?"

"You're not as quiet anymore," Nana added, "and I don't mean that in a bad way."

"That's right, you're moreâ€| confident now," Risa smiled proudly, like a mother to her graduating child. Everyone nodded in agreement while Chizuru blushed at the compliments she was receiving.  
>"At first, you seemed so distant from us. Although we weren't living in the same conditions as you, we all understood what you were going through. We didn't want you to graduate feeling sad or left out. We just had to do something!" Now, everyone was taking turns talking about their thoughts and feelings.<br>"And this wasn't an act of pity either. As we got closer to you, we realized how kind you were! We thought you were the type that just let people manipulate you, but you had your own unique personality all along," another girl added. Chizuru couldn't stop the tears from coming out and as she reached to rub away her tears, her friends all crowded around her to hug her. Even though she had lost her real family, she had gained another one at school before she realized it. And now, just as things were getting good, she was to graduate and leave them. They were all going to different schools. Risa was to enter an art school, hoping to become a designer of some sort. Nana wanted to go to an engineering school. Chizuru was to enter a school that was known to many as a high class school that only people with brains could enter. If you were to graduate from that school, your future was determined to be bright. Just as Chizuru was about to reply to all her friends, her teacher stopped them.

"Girls, please save it for your graduation. You're disrupting my class. Now go outside and reflect on it."

The girls all looked at each other before bursting out in laughter and walking out of the class, continuing their conversation in the hallway, much to their teacher's dismay.

\* \* \*

><p>The day of graduation brought a lot of smiles, but just as much as there were smiles, there were also tears. Nothing could describe the happy, yet lonely, feeling Chizuru felt that day as she walked on stage to get her diploma. Her family members weren't there, but her friends were and that alone was enough. At the end of the ceremony, she gave each and every one of her friends a very long hug, thanking them for all they've done for her in the short time they were together. Although Chizuru didn't have a cell phone, she recorded down all their numbers just in case she did in the future. Her friends had promised to never change their numbers, so Chizuru wouldn't lose contact with them. They exchanged addresses and Chizuru, although ashamed that she couldn't invite all her friends at

once since it was indeed a very small place, still gave them her address.<p>

As she walked home that day, diploma safely tucked in her bag, she smiled at herself for the progress she had made in her life. She had made her first batch of friends. Even though they were now separated, the fact that they were her friends didn't change. When Chizuru first transferred to a new elementary school from her previous school which only certain people were given the privilege to go to, she was alone. No one talked to her, afraid of her bad reputation and what unfortunate financial events she might bring to those who did talk to her. As she graduated from elementary school and entered junior high school, this thought was forgotten, but people still avoided her. Most likely, there were people who wanted to talk to her, but they didn't know how to start. They didn't know how to apologize for all the bad things they've said about her. Risa had been the first to break the invisible wall between her and everyone else. She was the one who taught her how fun things could be. She was the one who gave her hope again.

Chizuru was never a depressed person, even after being alone for most of her elementary school and junior high school life. She was thankful for the fact that she was even alive; thankful to her parents for giving her the rest of their fortune as they sacrificed themselves for her. She didn't want to admit it, but she was lonely. Even as she reaches her home, thankful to her friends for everything, she still realizes that there's something missing in her heart, a hole not even her best friends could fill. And because of that, she felt a little selfish and greedy. She already had friends that loved her for who she was, what more could she have asked for?

\* \* \*

><p>Sadly, Kazama doesn't make an appearance in this chapter, but I just had to explain a little about Chizuru's background before she goes into high school and meets Kazama. And as you can probably tell, this chapter covers her last year of junior high (grade 9) as well as her graduation.<p>

Thanks for reading and please review! I accept negative and positive reviews! Also, if there are any questions, I will gladly answer them. I try my best to respond to everyone's reviews! If you review using an account, I inbox my response to you. If you review using a name, I type my responses here...

To **\*\*chikagefan\*\***: Really? I'm so glad you liked it! Thank you for the compliments and also for reviewing!

To **\*\*O-chan\*\***: Thank you so much!

To **\*\*Lillian\*\***: Since Chizuru is living under Kazama's roof, she feels in debt to him. I will make it more detailed and explain it further as the story progresses. The first chapter is actually a oneshot and only after it was requested did I turn this into a multi-chapter story. Thank you for reading and reviewing! ^^

To **\*\*Olivia\*\***: Bonjour! D'abord, merci beaucoup pour lire mon histoire! Mon français n'est pas bon, mais je ferai de mon mieux! Au Japon, je crois qu'on besoin d'une autorisation pour appeler le



prÃ©nom de quelqu'un. Seulement si la personne est d'accord avec vous, vous pouvez appeler le prÃ©nom de la personne...je pense. Pour cette raison, Chizuru a eu de mal Ã  dire le prÃ©nom de Kazama. Haha, moi aussi! Si le baiser est de Kazama, je l'aimerai! J'espÃ©re que vous me comprendrez aussi. Et merci! Je suis trÃ¨s contente que vous, qui est franÃ§aise, avez lu mon histoire!

### 3. Chapter 2

Hey guys! I'm back! Exams are finally over and I can finally breathe comfortably again! .

>I'm really sorry that I was gone for so long, but I had to abandon writing for a while. I mean, my exams were just so ugly. D:<br>I'd like to give a BIG thank you to all those who waited patiently and wished me good luck on my exams. Thanks to that, I was able to get pass my exams without worrying! :]

Well, this chapter is a lot longer. That's another reason I took so long. I was also having writer's block... heh heh. I needed inspiration so I watched anime. :) Oh, and I kind of... abused the poor dividers in this chapter. I used so many haha. Do read and review though! Please and thanks!

**\*\*IMPORTANT NOTE\*\***: I changed a lot of things from Sweet School Life. For instance, I changed the school name as well as the school's history. The high school is prestigious and was always co-ed, unlike the school in SSL. I tried keeping certain things the same, but in order to continue my story smoothly, I had to change certain things. I hope you guys understand. ;)

**\*\*ANOTHER IMPORTANT NOTE\*\***: I have opened up a poll on my profile! I hope everyone can participate!

**\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki or its characters.\*\***

\* \* \*

><p>Chizuru was sitting on the edge of her bed, gazing down at her new uniform which was currently still folded inside the transparent plastic bag it came in. On top of the uniform was a letter of acceptance to her new high school.<p>

"Thank you for your application to Kazama High School. We are proud to announce that you have met all the school requirements and that you have been officially accepted to enter our school. This letter has been sent to you along with your new uniform as well as informational flyers and booklets. Please read through them and we hope to see you on the first day of school." The letter then goes on about how all her school fees are covered by the scholarship she gained and the location of the school.

Chizuru couldn't react at first. Everything was going according to plan; she was happy. A part of her was sad that she couldn't see her friends as much anymore, but she promised to contact them as soon as possible. Besides, they promised that they will meet up from time to time. Another part of her was scared about going into high school. She wondered if she would be able to make friends or not. After all, Risa and Nana only became friends with her towards the end of junior high. Her thoughts were all a mess, but one question in particular

made her worry the most: \_will I be alone again?\_

\* \* \*

><p>On the first day of high school, Chizuru made sure she wasn't late. She slept extra early the night before and woke up extra early in the morning. As always, her breakfast was brief and her lunch was packed just as quickly. She had forced herself to read all of the booklets the school had sent her weeks before the first day. She read them over and over again, hoping to grow accustomed to the school simply by reading the information written on the booklets. (Plus, she had absolutely nothing to do.) She had all the school rules memorized by now, but that still didn't make her feel any better. Chizuru was nervous, for sure, but she was also excited.<p>

Walking to school took longer than ever. Kazama High School was almost fifteen minutes farther than her junior high school. Walking with friends for that distance is no big deal, but when you're walking alone and in an alley most of the time, it's quite a scary task. It used to be better; there would be people all the way up to her street. Now, since most kids at her new school were rich, none of them walked her way. In fact, none of them probably even walked; they all had their expensive cars. Although Chizuru has never felt jealousy up until now, she suddenly did, as she turned around a corner and saw kids being dropped off by their chauffeurs in fancy cars.

She can still remember her family's personal chauffeur who was also a family friend. He was quite old and he often told Chizuru interesting stories while she was in the car. She could still remember all the times her butler opened the door for her as she stepped out. She would sometimes hit her head on the top of the car and he would always warn her to be more careful. Eventually, he (her butler) would just put his hand between her head and the ceiling of the car, tired of her constant reckless behaviour.

As memories began to overflow, she couldn't help it anymore. It's not that she hates her new life, although she did have a good reason to; it's just that she missed her old life. She missed her parents, the maids and servants that supported her, her spacious room, the long hallways that never seemed to end; she missed everything. A sense of tingling nostalgia began to make its way into Chizuru's mind and tears began to well up on the edges of her eyes, but she blinked, reluctant to let them out. If she cried on the first day of school, what would her classmates think? They would call her a crybaby that was dirt poor and jealous of their luxuries. Chizuru looked away, trying her best to blink away her tears. That was when she saw him.

He was stepping out of his white limousine, an action so graceful that she couldn't keep her eyes off of him. She also pointed out that he hadn't hit his head as he stepped out, an action that Chizuru swore she would work on as soon as she had a vehicle to practice with. Her eyes landed on his face and she saw the sharpest crimson eyes she has ever seen. They were cold and seemed to show no emotion, however what they did show was confidence and arrogance. His hair was a full and luscious gold; it looked so soft and free and even after the wind blew, his hair would always go back to the way it was. For some reason, the golden locks triggered something in her memory, but she just couldn't figure out what. She dismissed the thought and

continued to examine him. His skin, she noticed, was clear and perfect, untouched by the blazing hot sun that was shining down on him. As soon as he arrived, students, both male and female, clumped around him, pushing and shoving to get to him first. In her vision, there was no one but him; he was in the spotlight.

\* \* \*

><p>Kazama looked around and sighed heavily, letting go of his fatigue. <em>Yet another annoying year full of annoying people<em>, he thought. It was already his second year in high school and this year seemed to be not much different from last year. He sighed again, this being the fifth time including all the times he sighed in his car, and began walking towards the school, avoiding all the swooning girls and unworthy boys who, he knew, only followed him for the money.

\* \* \*

><p>Chizuru quickly walked away as soon as the finely built student began moving towards the school, worried he might catch the mesmerized look on her face and think weirdly of her. As soon as she entered the school grounds, she looked around and found a bulletin board that she assumed had all the classes and names on it. It wasn't hard to spy since there were so many people crowding around it. Chizuru tried squeezing through the crowd, mumbling a soft "excuse me" as she did so. With all the pushing and shoving, it was a miracle that she could actually get to the front of the crowd, however when she finally did, she searched for her name and smiled as she found it.<p>

\* \* \*

><p><em>Third floor&#128| classroom 311&#128| Oh, found it!<em> She didn't realize that she had said the last part out loud until a small group of people around her started chuckling. Chizuru smiled nervously, wondering if she had just made a fool of herself, when someone suddenly walked up to her.

"Hey, are you in first year class 2?" a man who had reddish-brown hair that framed his face and a pair of strong golden eyes asked. He was quite handsome, if she was to be honest.

"Um, yes," Chizuru replied nervously. She didn't want to appear rude to the professionally dressed man, but he was much too dazzling in every way.

"Great! I'm your homeroom teacher!" At the sound of this, Chizuru brightened up, "so, what's your name?"

"Chizuru, Yukimura Chizuru," she smiled.

"&#128|Chizuru, huh? That's a pretty name you got there! My name's Harada," he smiled back, patting her on the shoulder at an attempt to make Chizuru feel more comfortable, although failing miserably as Chizuru could only flinch on the impact. Was it only her imagination that he hesitated after hearing her name?

"Harada-sensei," Chizuru tried her best to ignore the hand that was put on her shoulder; after all, if she was going to be learning from

him, she was going to have to get used to him.

"Yes, that's right. Although if it's you, I don't mind if you call me by my first name!" his voice lowered to less than a whisper as he continued on, but Chizuru couldn't quite catch what he was saying.

"Sorry, what was that?"

"Oh, no! It's nothing. Anyway, let's go into the classroom, shall we? A lot of the students are already in there," he shrugged the topic off just like that, which caused Chizuru to feel a little bit suspicious and curious, but she knows too well that she shouldn't be digging her nose into other people's business if they didn't want her to know about it, so she just smiled and nodded.

\* \* \*

><p>"Class, I'm your homeroom and literature teacher. Call me Harada-sensei." Almost immediately, the girls cheered and the guys whistled.<p>

"Sano-chan! We love you!" one girl screamed.

"Hey, we heard that you gave everyone A's last year. Is that true?" a boy who was sitting incorrectly in his chair exclaimed.

More and more students began chattering, some amongst themselves, some towards the teacher. I looked at Harada-sensei and instantly felt something was wrong. She didn't have to think hard to realize that he was not in a good mood. Chizuru didn't know what was going to happen, but she knew it wouldn't be too good.

\* \* \*

><p>The walk towards the pavement area where the student council presentation and the welcoming ceremony was to take place was long and tedious. No one was allowed to talk or even make a sound. Just moments before, Harada-sensei had let go of his inner fury and directed his rage towards the people who angered him. Apparently, he hated being called "an easy teacher" or anything of the sort. She wondered just how in the world her classmates hit the mark on the first day. She was amazed, really, that even schools like Kazama High had teachers with flaws. At that, she giggled and immediately earned glares and "shhs" from the students around her. Embarrassed, she quickly bowed in apology and glanced up at Harada-sensei to see if she was in trouble. He was, in fact, staring straight at her. However, the expression on his face wasn't an angry one, but one that was far from it. He looked worried, but why would he be worried at her? She thought it as a stupid idea and at that, she giggled again, which once again, earned more glares and silent shushing from everyone around her.<p>

\* \* \*

><p>"Congratulations to all the first years on entering this school and welcome back to all the second and third years. If you don't already know, I am your principal, Kondou Isami. I look forward to working with all the teachers and students this year as well." The principal's speech went on and on about leadership skills and other

inspirational points. <em>He must have rehearsed this many times<em>, Chizuru thought, inwardly giggling at the obvious actions of her principal. \_So, even a principal from this school requires preparations before an assembly.\_

Then, Kondou-sensei thanked the audience for listening and directed our attention to the three students who were approaching the stage. Chizuru immediately recognized one of them as the student who caught her attention this morning. There were those eyes again, those strong eyes that captured the whole audience in its gaze. His hair, a mysterious colour that seemed foreign to her, was smooth and silky looking just like it did this morning. As he walked on stage, she realized that two people followed behind him, one with navy hair and one with dark red hair. Both of them looked fierce and walked with grace and confidence towards the stage.

As soon as the three of them reached the stage, all of the students cheered.

"Kazama-sama! Shiranui-sama! Amagiri-sama!" girls across the pavement screeched at the top of their lungs. Chizuru couldn't help but cover her ears from all the noise, an action that had apparently caught the golden-haired student's attention.

\* \* \*

><p>"Hmph, they're screaming my name again. Am I <em>that<em> popular?" one of them boasted.

"I believe that it is only because you are in the student council, Shiranui," the more logical of the two men replied matter-of-factly.

"Shut up, Amagiri! You and I both know that I am more popular than you," the other man argued back. The bickering went back and forth until an annoyed student council president stopped them.

"Be quiet. I found something interesting."

\* \* \*

><p>One part that Chizuru didn't quite understand was the point of the student council showing up. If they had actually given a speech of some sort, it would have been better, but all they did was stand up there, enduring the screams of the girls and the cheers of the guys. They only waved and smiled back; well, one of them did at least. The other two just stood there like statues. The man Chizuru saw this morning was even frowning quite a bit; he looked as though he was trying to figure something out. Ever since this morning, only strange things have been happening. Harada-sensei was keeping something from her and the handsome, yet mysterious, member of the student council had his eyes kept on her during the whole ceremony.<p>

\* \* \*

><p>The bell that signaled lunch time came and Chizuru realized that she got so caught up in all these strange happenings that she still hasn't made any friends yet. <em>Oh well, guess I'll have to eat by myself today<em>, she thought sadly. As she walked around the school

grounds, wondering where to sit down and eat, she found someone she recognized to be in her class. It didn't take long for her to realize that it was the boy who had implied Harada-sensei as an "easy teacher" this morning. She hadn't noticed that she had been staring until the boy turned around sharply and stared back. Embarrassed that she was caught staring at the boy, she bowed slightly, hoping to direct her eyes somewhere else so he wouldn't be able to see her. Straightening up, she sees the boy appear in front of her.

"You're in my class, right?" the boy questioned, "Yukimura Chizuru?" That's your name, right?" Chizuru was shocked that he had remembered her name when she, on the other hand, hadn't memorized his yet. During their class introductions, she had tried to memorize as many names as she could, but his name wasn't one that she had successfully memorized.

"Yes, uh?" Chizuru mentally smacked herself for her lack of speech.

"Toudou Heisuke."

"Ah, yes. Toudou-san," Chizuru smiled apologetically.

"No need to be so formal; we're classmates after all. Just call me Heisuke!" he smiled brightly. Chizuru smiled back. Could he be her first high school friend? "Ah, that's right! Why don't you join the guys and I for lunch?" The sudden invitation was welcoming and Chizuru couldn't resist accepting his kind offer, but who were "the guys" that he was talking about?

\* \* \*

><p>"Guys, meet Yukimura Chizuru," Heisuke opened the door to the roof top at the same time he spoke, already expecting his friends to be waiting for him, "she's in the same class as me." I followed his gaze to find three students, sitting on the floor cross legged.<p>

"Chizuru? What a cute name. Come here, Chizuru-chan, sit beside your senpai," a man with pale brown hair and jade-coloured eyes offered. Innocently, Chizuru thanked the upperclassman and sat down on the spot he was openly patting on.

"Geez, Chizuru. Don't trust Souji that easily!" Heisuke yelled.

"That's Souji-\_senpai \_to you, Heisuke," he smirked, his tone not at all matching his words.

Then, Heisuke turned to Chizuru. "Ah, let me introduce you, Chizuru. This is my childhood friend, Okita Souji."

Chizuru turned to Okita and bowed politely, "it's very nice to meet you, Okita-san." Okita smiled and nodded approvingly at their new friend.

"Care to explain how you met her, Heisuke?" Another of Heisuke's friends suddenly spoke up, breaking the silence and causing Chizuru to jump a bit.

"Man, you make me sound like I'm desperate. I was just about to head up here when I saw her looking at me, so I thought she might have wanted to join us or something, right Chizuru?" he looked at Chizuru, cueing her to speak up.

"Ah, yeahâ€¦ I was sort of looking for a place to eat when I saw Heisuke-kun. I thought he looked familiar and he ended up being my classmate," Chizuru looked down and stuttered a bit, not knowing what to say after being cued so suddenly. The student nodded in understanding.

"My name's Yamazaki Susumu. I'm in the same grade as you, but I'm in the class next over. I'm also Heisuke's childhood friend." Chizuru noticed that he wasn't smiling, but he wasn't being cold either. Satisfied that she had made another friend, she turned to the last of the four students and looked at him, wondering if he was going to speak up. Sensing that she was expecting an introduction, the last boy finally spoke.

"Saitou Hajime."

Chizuru wasn't quite satisfied by this. Did thisâ€¦ Saitou-san not like her? Was she intruding on their nostalgic lunch break together? As she continued to ponder this over, Heisuke decided to break the awkward silence.

"Ah! That's right! Saitou, you're on the disciplinary committee, right?" he, in a desperate attempt to liven up the atmosphere, spat out, "that's not good, Chizuru! We can't be late! If we are, Saitou's gonna kick us hard in the nuts!"

"Idiot, Chizuru doesn't have nuts. She's a girl, remember?" Okita chuckled a bit, but then realized Chizuru's disappointment and stopped. "What is it, Chizuru-chan? Are you worried about what he said? Don't worry; you're a girl no matter what others say about you."

Chizuru felt like she was being pampered and she hated that feeling, but she only nodded in comprehension.

"Well, what are we waiting for? Let's eat our lunch before our lunch break ends!" Heisuke, the ever so optimistic one, started to eat as soon as he finished talking. With nothing more to say, the whole group began to eat.

"Chizuru, is that all you're eating?" Chizuru flinched at Heisuke's sudden question.

"Uhâ€¦ yeah, I'm on a diet," she lied, hoping he would buy it. She didn't really want her first friend in high school to wonder how such a poor girl was able to enter the school. Luckily, the boy was too oblivious to hear the dishonesty in her voice, however the other three weren't as unmindful.

Lunch time ended a little too quickly for Chizuru and the group was forced back into their classrooms. Chizuru was about to leave the rooftop, but not before she thanked the group, when Heisuke stood up and called out to her.

"Wait, Chizuru! I'm coming too!" He was rushing to pack up his lunch

boxes which he had spread all across the floor. Giggling at the sight, she nodded and waited for Heisuke to finish packing up before heading down the stairs together.

"I wonder who our math teacher isâ€|" Heisuke suddenly brought up. Their class had math next and no one had told them who their teacher was yet. Chizuru nodded in agreement; she, herself, had wanted to know who their teacher was. After all, math is a very strict subject. If they had a strict teacher, then that would have been even worse. It didn't take long to reach their classroom, but when they did, their eyes were quickly glued onto an attractive looking man. His hair was the colour of a raven, ebony, and his eyes were the most alluring of them all. They were violet, a colour so deep that, just by staring, one would get lost in them. Hijikata-sensei was what all the students around him called him. The fact that such a stunning man was to be their math teacher left Chizuru bewildered.

"What are you staring at?" Hijikata-sensei asked sharply.

"Nothing!" Both Chizuru and Heisuke were embarrassed that they were caught staring at their teacher. The teacher simply eyed them carefully before resuming his work, which was most likely the course notes for today's class.

"Wow, I've never seen such a girly looking teacher before," Heisuke whispered as soon as they were out of Hijikata-sensei's hearing range. Chizuru looked at her friend. \_Heisuke-kun looks pretty girly too\_, she thought, but she would never say such a thing.

"Just because he has pretty eyes?" Chizuru giggled a bit, leading Heisuke into a thinking state.

"Well, I guess it's that."

The rest of the class was mostly comprised of Hijikata-sensei lecturing us on how loud, obnoxious, annoying, useless, and unintelligent we were. Chizuru had to admit that they \_were\_ being a little bit too noisy, but he didn't have to go and tell them so flatly. Even as the last bell rung, some girls were still squeaking about how gorgeous their teacher was. \_Class is going to be fun from now on\_, Chizuru thought sarcastically, sighing while doing so.

\* \* \*

><p>As Chizuru stepped out of the school building and into the afternoon-evening sunlight, she turned around and faced her new school, still amazed by the grandness of the building. Chizuru thought that her homeroom and literature teacher, Harada-sensei was handsome, but her math teacher, Hijikata-sensei too? This school seemed to have hired only the best looking teachers that were around. It wasn't just that; each teacher had a special aura around them that made them unique. This isn't an ordinary school after all.<p>

\* \* \*

><p>"Hey, Kazama! You've been spacing out ever since the ceremony this morning," an annoyed Shiranui said, "what's gotten into you?"<p>

"Are you worried about me?" Kazama asked sarcastically.



"Like hell I am. You said something about finding something interesting. What was that about?" Shiranui had no time to play Kazama's little games; he had to figure out what was bothering Kazama so much that he could not even focus on their student council activities. It was a pain and burden to the council if their president could not act accordingly.

Kazama smirked and looked outside the window, instantly finding the "interesting thing" he was looking for. His eyes continued to follow her figure until she was out of sight.

"I finally found you, Chizuru."

\* \* \*

><p>Kazama finally made an appearance! Well, how was this chapter? I'm sorry if it's really long, boring, and confusing. It was kind of hard to keep everything under control. I had to explain so much and as a result, this chapter (along with the next chapter and maybe even the one after that) will be an introduction to Chizuru's new school life.<p>

Now time for review responses to reviewers who don't have an account:

Dear\*\* Olivia\*\*: De rien! Et merci beaucoup pour le commentaire et pour attendez avec impatience!

Dear \*\*chikagefan\*\*: Haha! He made an appearance! Sorry it's so short though. I wanted to let the readers know more about the school first. Kazama is such a mysterious man after all.~ Thank you for reading and reviewing!

Dear \*\*vincyanna\*\*: Yeah, she did sound lonely, didn't she? :( Well, luckily she made friends towards the end of her junior high life. She will definitely make more friends in the future though. To start off, she's already friends with Heisuke! Thanks for reading and reviewing!

Please review and tell me how I can improve!

#### 4. Chapter 3

Hey guys! I'm back from my trip! Well, I was back a week ago actually...LOL It's just that I wasn't able to... you know, get in the mood... the writing-Chizuru-and-Chikage-fanfictions mood... So, I really don't know how this chapter turned out. I have trouble writing multichapter fanfictions because I have trouble putting things together and the slightest distraction can... well, distract me!

I'm really sorry about any OOCness or anything that doesn't make sense! I tried my best! I really did! Anyway, I hope you guys will still read it and I hope to read your reviews again! For anyone who has not checked out my\*\* poll\*\* yet, do go and check it out! So... go and vote... on my profile... Now! I know you want to. :D I would really appreciate it!

\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki or any of its properties. \*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Chizuru woke up with a yawn, stretching her arms above her head to ease her sore and aching shoulders. Clearly, she needed a better bed, but with her current salary, what could she do about it?<p>

As soon as school ended yesterday, she went from workplace to workplace before heading home. Luckily, since it was only the beginning of the year, she didn't have a lot of homework to do. Well, to be honest, she only had math homework which was assigned by her much too reliable teacher, Hijikata-sensei. "It's extra practice," he would say over and over again when her classmates were caught complaining. As the good girl she knew she was, she finished her homework during her breaks at work. Her dinner was provided by one of her workplaces, which just so happened to be a caf  . Life was pretty convenient for Chizuru and she had great connections to the townsfolk which earned her a lot of gifts from time to time. Honestly, Chizuru couldn't wish for anything more.

Getting out of bed now, she started her daily routine. Grabbing a quick breakfast on the go and packing a small lunch as usual, she opened the door to the small condominium she lived in. Normally, she would start walking towards school right away. However, today was slightly different. From her current position, she could spy multiple cars parked around the condominium. Men dressed in black were gathered at the bottom of the stairs, waiting. Who they were waiting for was a mystery to Chizuru, however as she walked down the set of stairs, she soon realized that they were waiting for her.

"Good morning, Yukimura-sama," the closest man standing near her greeted while bowing. As if on cue, everyone else bowed after him.

Chizuru wasn't stupid; she knew that number one, a group of men dressed in black that knew her name was suspicious. Number two, if they had her home surrounded, she was in danger. And number three, she wasn't supposed to talk to strangers. So trying her best to be as nice as possible, yet not giving any clues, she simply bowed a slight arch before walking away, avoiding eye contact with the men. She was stopped, though, by a man who stepped forward, blocking her way and disabling her from moving any further.

"I'm sorry if we startled you, but we are under orders to bring you to school safely. So, will you come with us, Yukimura-sama?"

>Chizuru stared at him, her head full of thoughts and questions. <em>These men claim that they are under orders to deliver me to school? Can I trust them? Who's the one behind all of this? Does that person know me? Well, if they know my name, clearly they know me, but do I know them?<em> She had so many questions to ask, yet she couldn't ask even one, because before she knew it, she was picked up and, lightly, pushed into a car.

\* \* \*

><p>"What kind of situation is this?" Chizuru asked the men who surrounded her, "who ordered you to do this to me?"<p>

"Young master specifically told us not to tell you. He wanted it to

be a surprise, however I'm sure it must be obvious," the man who had pushed her into the car responded, smiling with sheer amusement, "after all, young master\_ is\_ your childhood friend." \_What? Childhood friend?\_ Chizuru stopped struggling for a while to think. For as long as she knew, her only friends were Risa, Nana, and the new friends she met at Kazama High. She had no recollection what so ever about any other friends she had in the past. Her childhood consisted of only her mother and father!

"I don't know what you're talking about," she proclaimed using as much strength as she could muster up, hoping to sound even a little bit brave, "but you better let me go this instant or I'm calling the police!"

"How do you intend to do that?" the man asked in return. He had a point. Her hands weren't tied up, but she had no cell phone. She regretted not buying a phone with the money she saved over the summer. Then again, who knew that she would find herself to be in this type of situation anyway?

Chizuru didn't answer the man's question; she just stared outside the window. At least they weren't lying about taking her to school. The direction they were heading towards was, without a doubt, where the school is located. Giving up, she attempted to start a conversation with a question that has been on her mind since they got in to the car.

"Soâ€¦ when do I get to meetâ€¦ this childhood friend of mine?" Chizuru asked, not taking her eyes off the scenery outside of the window.

"You will see young master at school."

"How do I know it's him?"

"Yukimura-sama, you are one funny lady indeed! How can you not remember the face of your own childhood friend? Even if our young master has grown, the colour of his hair or eyes has not changed. You'll be able to recognize him right away," the man smiled. He \_did\_ have a point, but it's impossible to remember someone you've never really met before.

"But I'm telling you I don't have a childhood friend!" Chizuru turned away from the window to look at the man, annoyed that he still didn't get it.

"You do. You \_are \_the daughter of the prestigious Yukimura family that disappeared almost ten years ago, correct?"

"Well, that's right, but what does that prove?"

"If you still can't figure it out after all these clues, then we can't help you. You'll just have to wait for young master to come get you," the man sighed, giving up after the many attempts of getting the girl to remember.

"Like I said, I DON'T HAVE A CHILDHOOD FRIEND!"

\* \* \*

><p>"Good morning, Chizuru!" a hyped up Heisuke came running towards Chizuru.<p>

"Ah, morning, Heisuke-kun!" Chizuru, on the other hand, wasn't feeling very lively after the kidnapping in the morning. Well, she did get a ride from them, but it wasn't in a very pleasant way. Despite all of this, she did remember to thank the group of men who brought her to school.

\* \* \*

><p>"<em>We're here."<em>

"\_Oh, we are."\_

"\_Don't worry, Yukimura-sama. You will find him for sure. If not, then he will find you." \_

"\_If you say so, well, it's not like I really want to find him or be found by him. I just want to tell him to stop this kind of thing before it gets out of control."\_

"\_Whatever you say, Yukimura-sama."\_

"\_"

"\_"

"\_"

"\_What is it, Yukimura-sama? You look like you have something to say."\_

"\_Stop calling me Yukimura-sama; it doesn't feel right anymore. Just call me Chizuru."\_

"\_Is that quite alright with you, Yukimura-sama?"\_

"\_Ugh, yes. Please, I beg you. Just call me Chizuru."\_

"\_Oh, no! Making Yukimura-sama beg to a bodyguard such as myself, I apologize for my lack of-"\_

"\_IF YOU'RE REALLY SORRY, THEN START CALLING ME CHIZURU!" \_Just like that, Chizuru stepped out of the car and ran into the school before they could call her "Yukimura-sama" again.\_

\* \* \*

><p>Well, she sort of thanked them, sort of. Heisuke, noticing her lack of enthusiasm, put a firm, but gentle, hand on her shoulder.<p>

"Chizuru, what's wrong?" She could hear worry and care in his tone. Chizuru smiled, not wanting Heisuke to worry about her more than he already is.

"I'm fine. Just some morning drama, that's all."

"Class, today will be your first physical education class,"

Harada-sensei scanned the class, waiting for the reactions of his students. Most of the girls were feigning tears while all of the guys were cheering.

"Yes! No learning for an hour!"

"Harada-sensei~ Gym is so tiring! Do we really have to go?"

"That's right. No excuses!" A majority of the girls started to whine even more, but Chizuru stood up and encouraged her classmates.

"Guys! It's going to be fun! We're going to play a lot of games, right? Besides, we can talk a lot during P.E. compared to our normal class time," Chizuru smiled at her classmates.

"Ugh, Chizuru, I don't know if that's how you should encourage your classma-" Harada-sensei started.

"Well, yeah, I guess," one girl nearby answered slowly.

"That's true," another chimed in after. Before long, all the girls agreed on (the last part of) Chizuru's resolve. Together as a class, everyone ran towards the gym, leaving Harada-sensei alone, deep in thought. \_So the daughter of the \_\_Yukimura family is like this nowâ€| since when did she become soâ€| strong and unique?\_

\* \* \*

><p>"I am the girls' physical education teacher, Kimigiku. I understand that you are all girls, but that does not give you the right to slack off. After all, keeping a healthy body requires physical activities and I'm sure you would all like to look your best in front of the one you like," the beautiful woman that stood in front of everyone stated. Immediately, a big portion of the class shouted out agreements and the woman, their gym teacher, smiled warmly. <em>Wow, what a way to get girls to exercise<em>, Chizuru thought, giggling which caught Kimigiku-sensei's attention.

"Is there something wrong, Yukimura-san?"

"Ugh, no. It's just that it's shocking how you seem to understand all of us very well." As soon as the last word came out of Chizuru's mouth, she covered her mouth. "I didn't mean that you were old and that's why it's shocking, but ugh... You look very young actually! And you're super pretty too! I was just thinking that youâ€|" She was stopped by Kimigiku-sensei's sudden tender smile.

"Don't worry, Yukimura-san. Any insult that comes out of your mouth can be easily overlooked. In fact, I cannot thank you enough for your compliment." Then, Kimigiku-sensei did something out of the ordinary and knelt on the ground, bowing. The whole class was in awe at their gym teacher. Chizuru, herself, was confused. Again, something weird had happened. Was it just this school?

"Uhâ€| Kimigiku-sensei? You don't really have to bow to me for such a-"

"No! I apologize for cutting you off, Yukimura-san, but I am not worthy of such kind words." \_And I am? \_"I am very happy to have the

opportunity to teach my savior." \_Savior? \_"Yukimura-san, I understand that your family no longer has the wealth that used to support you, but I cannot forget the kind favours your family has done for my family." \_Ah, that explains it.\_

All the girls in the class suddenly came to a realization.

"Oh, that's right! Wasn't the Yukimura family that famous family that ended up disappearing years ago?"

"That's why I thought her name was so familiar!"

"So Chizuru's the daughter of that family?"

Chizuru froze. Everyone knew that she wasn't rich anymore; would they kick her out? In the first place, it was never a secret, so she had never decided to change her surname. Now, she regretted it. Chizuru was afraid that she didn't belong in the school anymore. Then again, she had never belonged here in the first place. She had heard stories about this before. In rich schools, if a student's family suddenly went bankrupt, they would lose the authority to be at that school. She sighed and mentally planned the rest of her life in her head, awaiting the punishment.

"That's great!" Suddenly, a girl from her class shouted, "my family was always really fond of your family! You helped us out a lot in our times of need. Sadly, we weren't able to help you when you were in your time of need. We had a lot of owing on our part too."

"Now that I think about it, I still remember when your family came over and donated a great supply of clothes to my younger sister! Those must have been your clothes!" another girl chimed in. "Those clothes were really cute. She loved them!"

The excitement finally reached Chizuru and she gasped. Were her classmates happy about her? Did these people not want to kick her out? Was she welcomed here after all? Had she finally found a place she belonged in? The sudden rush of questions filled her head, but the next lines spoken by her teacher answered them all.

"Yukimura-san," Kimigiku said softly, "we would like you to know that you are loved dearly. Please do not feel inferior to everyone." Chizuru smiled and nodded; these were the words that she had wanted to hear all along.

\* \* \*

><p>"Hey, how was gym?" Heisuke caught up to Chizuru, slightly out of breath. She assumed that the boys had some tough training on their first day of gym.<p>

"It was fun," she replied, "we played all these games."

"Really? We had to run laps over and over again!"

"Who was your teacher?" she asked, curious. What kind of teacher would give their students such a hard and tiring task on their first day?

"Who else other than the legendary Nagakura Shinpachi-sensei? He went so hard on us!" Truthfully, Chizuru has never heard of this "legendary Nagakura Shinpachi-sensei," but she nodded in sympathy anyway. Suddenly, the P.A. system interrupted them and everyone silenced.

"To all students and teachers, it has just been recently decided that there will be a student council assembly in the afternoon. All classes will be called down during this time. Thank you."

"The authority they haveâ€|" Heisuke mumbled.

\* \* \*

><p>"And so, this is the answerâ€|" Hijikata-sensei finished his lesson off, tapping the piece of chalk he was holding on the blackboard briefly. "Now, does anyone have any questions?"<p>

No one dared to raise up their hand under the supervision of their math teacher and as a result, the class was kept quiet at all times. Even the girls have stopped squealing in delight; they must have learned their lesson from their first day of school: Hijikata-sensei is not someone you should mess with. Chizuru, on the other hand, did have a question that she did not understand and even though she was afraid that he would yell at her, she had to ace the test. She couldn't afford, literally, for her grades to drop. Reluctantly, she raised up her hand. "What is it?" he asked, looking over at her.

"Um, I still don't get how to do example number 7," she looked down, embarrassed and wondering if everyone else already understood how to do the question. Hijikata-sensei was quiet for a while, probably pondering whether he should teach it again or not, Chizuru guessed. Finally, he spoke.

"Number 7 is more challenging, I suppose. Fine, I'll go over it again." The whole class sighed in relief. Suddenly, she felt someone tap on her arm; it was Heisuke.

"Hey, thanks Chizuru!"

"For what?" she tilted her head, wondering what she did.

"I didn't get that question either and I didn't really want to ask him. You seriously saved me there."

"Oh, you're welcome!" She was happy that she was able to help Heisuke and, apparently, the rest of the class as well.

"Can class 1A and 1B please come to the assembly please? I repeat, class 1A and 1B," the speakers interrupted the lesson. Chizuru couldn't help but notice the unpleasant expression Hijikata-sensei was wearing. He was also saying something, under his breath, along the lines of "those student council members" and "interrupting our lesson." It didn't take a genius to figure out that their math teacher wasn't very pleased with the student council.

\* \* \*

><p>"Good afternoon. My name is Amagiri Kyuuju," the man with

maroon-coloured hair spoke up as soon as the last class lined up, "and I am the student council's treasurer." The audience didn't give a chance for Amagiri to finish before they started cheering and clapping. He waited until they settled down before continuing. "The student council officially welcomes you to a new school year."<p>

"Why didn't they have this assembly yesterday?" Chizuru wondered out loud. One of her classmates overheard and didn't hesitate to answer.

"I heard that the student council president was supposed to deliver a speech, but he didn't want to write it, so they had nothing to say yesterday. In the end, Amagiri-sama had to write it last minute and present it today," the classmate whispered.

Chizuru mouthed a silent "oh," inwardly shocked and disappointed by the uncivilized behaviour of the student council.

"Hey everybody," the rather tanned student spoke up in a carefree tone, "I'm the almighty vice president! Shiranui Kyou's the name. Feel free to call me Shiranui-sama." Almost everyone in the audience yelled out "Shiranui-sama" after that. \_The guy sure has a way of manipulating people\_, she thought. Suddenly, the whole crowd was silent and everyone stared at the last remaining member of the student council. \_The most handsome one too\_, Chizuru thought to herself before smacking her cheek at the outrageous comment, leading to a confused Heisuke.

"My name is Kazama Chikage," he paused before continuing. \_So that's his name\_, Chizuru thought, but she cut herself short to listen to the rest of his speech. "You must have already realized that this school is mine, so any reckless behaviour or defying of the student council will lead to your expulsion. Remember that well." His short, yet menacing, speech finished with finality, but he continued to eye each and every one of the students in the crowd before stopping on Chizuru.

"Is it just me or is he staring at me?" she nudged Heisuke, hoping to hear that it was just her.

"Nope, it's not just you," he replied, never taking his eyes off of Kazama. Suddenly, Chizuru remembered what the men had said this morning. Could Kazama be her childhood friend? \_No way\_, Chizuru thought, \_he's the heir of such a prestigious family. How could I even think of being his childhood friend? That's just selfish. After all, my family wasn't even that great in the past. Still, his hair seriously reminds me of something, but what? No, it couldn't beâ€¦\_| \_I'm sure the guy I'm looking for is lessâ€¦|rich. \_Chizuru paused in her thoughts. Since when did she even care about who her childhood friend was? She dismissed the deliberation and refocused her attention towards the stage to find that he was still staring at her.

"Heisuke-kun, this is sort of getting creepy," she tugged on his sleeve, earning his attention.

"Yeah, I hear ya alright. It's creepy for me too. Do you know him from somewhere else or something?"



"No! I don't think so," she absent mindedly continued to tug on Heisuke's sleeve.

"Did you anger him or something?"

"I didn't even meet him!" she yelled out, a bit louder than she would have hoped. However, it was too late. Everyone's attention was already on her and she felt herself turn red under everyone's gazes.

"Yukimura Chizuru from class 1B, please come to the student council office after this assembly...\_alone\_." It was none other than the student council president, Kazama Chikage, speaking.

"Well, you angered him now," Heisuke whispered.

\* \* \*

><p>The discovery of the use of dividers has led to my destruction as a fanfiction author... ANYWAY, I HOPE YOU ENJOYED THAT! Thank you for reading and please review! Don't forget to vote in the poll on my profile if you haven't done so already! Last time's reviews from non-members...<p>

Dear **\*\*chikagefan\*\***: Haha, I agree! It's kinda like her high school debut or something, right? :D Thank you for reading and reviewing!

Dear **\*\*Olivia\*\***: Haha, merci! Je suis trÃ"s contente!

Dear **\*\*Natalie\*\***: I'm a big fan of the pair too! And even if he's a bastard, I still love him~! Thank you so much for reading and reviewing!

Dear **\*\*BriarRose\*\***: Thank you so much for reading and reviewing! I'm really glad you enjoyed it!

## 5. Chapter 4

Sorry for the long delay, but here is the next chapter! I'm seriously taking this too slow... Chizuru's still on her second day of school! (I think... See, I don't even remember anymore!) D; Anyway, I hope you guys don't mind.

Btw, my **\*\*poll\*\*** is still available on my profile! I know this is annoying of me to announce this again, but if you haven't voted already, do vote! I would really appreciate it! To all those who have already voted, thank you so much!

I hope you enjoy this chapter as well! I look forward to reading your reviews!

I know a lot of people are probably hating on me right now 'cause I said Chizuru will live with Kazama, but she really will! Just in the later chapters. :( It's coming up though! It really is! I appreciate every one for being so patient, but I really had to point this out. From the bottom of my heart, I'm really sorry! OTL

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\* \* \*

><p>Kazama has called down many rebellious students to his office before. Every time, he had the same objective in mind: to lecture them about all the things they've done wrong and to assign punishments to each and every one of them. Never once has he listened to the excuses they carried; they could have been true or false for all he cared, but he still never listened. Perhaps it was this fact that earned him the name "demon." He didn't mind, really; he had to admit that it fit himself quite well. He was cold and he never had mercy when judging whether someone's actions were right or wrong. Befitting of a demon, no?<p>

After all the experience he has had with these types of situations, it wasn't surprising to see the girl he called down to his office fidgeting or frightened for what might happen to her. Her footsteps were light and timid, but it didn't stop this young master from being able to detect them. He could hear her quiet footsteps slowing down before coming to a stop in front of the student council office. She knocked, hesitantly, but showed no signs of entering without permission. Kazama was interested in what the girl would do if he didn't let her in, so he stayed put and kept quiet. After all, a bit of fun here and there wouldn't hurt. Much to his dismay, she knocked over and over again before finally speaking.

"Umâ€|is anyone there?"

\_That's it?\_ Kazama was caught off guard, which rarely happened. \_Isn't she going to come bursting in like she used to?\_ After a few more moments of waiting, all was silent. He was curious whether she had left or not, so he finally got up and tramped to the door. Opening it, he notices a crouching Chizuru on the floor.

"Oh, Kazama-samaâ€|was it? I knocked on the door, but no one-"

"I know," he was irritated and Chizuru didn't know why. She came right after the assembly like he had asked. Was he that angry about her interrupting the ceremony after all?

"Come in." His words that came out as a harsh order snapped Chizuru out of her thoughts and she quickly obeyed, not evening wanting to think about the disastrous things that might happen if she didn't. As soon as they entered the spacious room, Chizuru's mouth hung open at the exquisite luxury that surrounded her. Golden walls enclosed the large area, accompanied by the radiance from the beautiful chandelier hanging from the centre of the room. The whole floor was covered with a stainless velvet carpet (she had to remind herself to be careful while standing on it.) and the whole room was decorated with finely polished furniture. While taking in her surrounding, she had completely forgotten about the real reason she was there in the first place. She quickly focused her attention back on Kazama.

"Um- "

"Take a seat."

"Ah, o- okay." She mentally smacked herself in the head for stuttering before scanning across the room for a place to sit. The

comfy looking couches over there were an option, but there was a tag that read "student council members only." \_Okay, definitely not there.\_

"Sit there."

Chizuru faced Kazama again to see that he was looking at the so called "reserved" couches.

"But they're rese-"

"I said \_sit there,\_" his simple gaze turned into a glare as he directed it over to Chizuru. She gulped nervously and mumbled a quick "yes" before scrambling over to the couches.

There were three couches and a tea table to be exact. The tea table was brown and embroidered with elaborate leaf designs. The couches were a different shade of red from the carpet, most likely to avoid camouflaging with it, although she doubted that people would mistake the couches to be carpet and walk straight into it. Two of the couches were double seated, however it was obvious to Chizuru that it could fit more than two people. The other couch was single seated and was the same colour as the other two couches, but it was special for its golden edges that the others didn't have.

Stepping closer to the set of couches, she noticed that one of the double couches didn't have a reservation sign on it. Sighing in relief, she knew that this was the couch he had mentioned earlier for her to sit at. Sitting on it, she realized that it was very soft and comfy, almost to the point where one could fall asleep on it. The tension she had before was almost all gone, replaced by the exhaustion she hadn't quite noticed a minute ago. The fear of getting in trouble had really tired her out. Further more, the extra practice for math that Hijikata-sensei keeps assigning and the repetitive work at her part time jobs didn't really help either. She hadn't even realized that her eye lids were drooping shut until she felt herself being lifted up.

"Wha-" Just as soon as she was off the couch, she was back on it, except this time, she was on the other double seated couch. "Isn't this the one for student council members?" she asked, puzzled.

"Exactly."

"Then why-"

"Welcome to the student council, Chizuru."

\* \* \*

><p>"I don't understand, Kazama-sama. I thought I was in trouble." Chizuru was always a very smart child, getting good grades and all, so when she says that she doesn't understand something, she really means it. She yelled out during the assembly, got called over to the student council office, and suddenly became a member? Isn't that a good thing?<p>

"You will be if you keep calling me 'Kazama-sama.' Is this your new way of pulling a prank on me?"

"What?" Chizuru didn't know what he was saying. After examining his face, she couldn't tell what he was thinking either. Was he just making things up to confuse her? Well, he got away with it, she'd give him credit for that. "What do you mean?"

"Stop acting. You disappear for almost a decade without contacting me. Suddenly, you're back and you start acting different?" Kazama's voice began to rise and Chizuru could feel the tension from before come back again, this time with confusion mixed within.

"Different? How would you know-"

"Hey, hey, hey." The sudden entry of another student council member surprised Chizuru and the two turned to look at the person standing by the door. \_When did he even come in? \_Chizuru wondered. The thought of where the other two members went had crossed her mind before, but she never bothered voicing it out. The somewhat carefree voice acted as a savior to Chizuru, giving her time to relax and let out the breath she hadn't notice she had been holding.

"Sorry to bother you guys from...whatever you were doing, but the documents from before need to be filed or else I'm getting in trouble for-"

"Go away, Shiranui." Kazama scowled at him. Shiranui sent a silent glare back before sighing, turning around, and closing the door behind him. \_He's leaving already? \_Chizuru was now mentally crying for him to come back. She didn't like this Shiranui guy that much, but it's better than being alone with Kazama.

"So, why don't you tell me what exactly happened to you?" Kazama's attention directed itself back to Chizuru as soon as he was sure Shiranui was gone.

"Um, you should really be getting back to those documents from-" Well, what can she say? She tried.

"Are you still playing that game with me? You know how much I love games, don't you?" He teased, coming closer to her as he spoke.

"You do?" Chizuru's voice was filled with hope and she couldn't help but jump up in surprise. Maybe she wasn't in trouble (for doing something she has no idea she did) after all?

"Do you know what sarcasm means?" He chuckled, "as gullible as always. Idiot, I was just being sarcastic."

"Eh?" Chizuru was dumbfounded and highly disturbed that she had gotten tricked so easily. If this had been a much unluckier situation, then she could have gotten kidnapped by a stranger! Good thing the man in front of her is the reliable student council president of a prestigious school, right? He'sâ€| reliableâ€| right?

"If you want to keep acting, then go ahead. I don't know how much I can handle, though." By now, he was kneeling on the couch and his arms had found its way to blocking Chizuru from escaping. His movements were so slow and well controlled that she didn't even know when he had done it. He leaned in, his face no more than a few

centimeters from her own. Having no choice but to take a closer look at the man in front of her now, all the features that Chizuru saw yesterday were visible once again, but with more detail than last time. His crimson eyes were even more beautiful up close, glowing with a dark radiance and an expression that Chizuru couldn't quite put her finger on. His long eyelashes complimented his mesmerizing eyes and his golden locks looked smooth and relaxing to the touch. She had to resist patting his head and fingering through his hair. He would just call her disgusting, but his hair really did look nice. She could smell a soft fragrance that she assumed was his shampoo. She really wanted to have a closer sniff, but once again, he would just call her disgusting, maybe even pathetic this time. Realizing that she was staring back at him, she quickly looked down, accidentally catching her eyes on his lips. Those rosy lips looked so soft that she couldn't help but feel a sudden urge to touch them. \_His lips\_, she thought, \_they're movingâ€¦\_

"Chizuruâ€¦Hey, Chizuru. Are you listening to me, Chizuru?"

"H-huh? What?"

"You were spacing out," he informed, "you still haven't changed."

"I haven't changed? B-but I'm saying, this is the first thing we've met!" Chizuru yelled, squeezing her eyes shut to keep her eyes off of his captivating appearance. If she didn't, she was afraid that she might "space out" again.

"Hmâ€¦is this how you want it to go?" his tongue made a quick 'tsk' sound before he continued, "stubborn as always. Well, I never did hate that headstrong part of you." Although reluctant to, he stepped back from the couch, much to Chizuru's relief.

In a situation like this, she really didn't know what to do. Apparently, getting kidnapped and brought to school like that in the morning wasn't enough. \_Hold on, this morningâ€¦ childhood friendâ€¦\_ Chizuru didn't believe that she had a childhood friend, but it wouldn't hurt to give it a shot. Well, if it was Kazama, then maybe it \_would\_ hurt, but he \_is\_ the closest person she'd believe to be her "childhood friend." Without thinking about it any further, she spoke her mind.

"Ch-childhoodâ€¦friendâ€¦" she mumbled. For a second, Kazama looked strangely at her. Then...

"Yeah, what about me?" he answered nonchalantly.

\_Wait, so he really \_is\_ the "childhood friend" that they were talking about? How could this be? I've never met him before!\_

"So you've had enough of acting?" he asked her. Chizuru nodded, just for the sake of it. "Then can you tell me where you've been up until now?"

"Atâ€¦school?"

He glared at her. Was she playing around with him again? \_No, she's being honest, \_he realized after studying her candid expression. "Let me rephrase that. What have you been doing up until now?"

"Oh, you know, normal...things." She still hasn't fully accepted him as her childhood friend yet, and even if she did, she has no recollections of the man what so ever, so she has no intention of telling him such things. Besides, he would just mock her about her part time jobs and such. They live in different classes of the society after all.

Kazama smirked. She was being careful not to reveal too much information to him on purpose, but he already knows where she lives. All he had to do was call some of his family's bodyguards to follow, not stalk,\_ follow\_, her home to find out where she lived. Then, this morning, he specifically asked them to pick her up. He would have been in the car, himself, but he had a student council meeting. He personally despised the meetings that he was forced to call on and attend, but he became the president and he would never go back on his words. Besides, he had plenty of time to play with Chizuru.

"I'll drive you home today," he stated, starting a new topic and catching Chizuru off guard.

"You can drive?" Chizuru asked with sheer surprise apparent in her tone, which she obviously received a glare in return.

"No. I'll \_give\_ you a ride home today," he rephrased. He was already quite used to Chizuru's rather honest way of thinking; she was always like this when they were young. Chizuru's mouth formed a silent "O" in understanding, but then, realization hit her and she quickly rejected the offer. "Y-you don't really have to go through all the trouble of giving me a ride home. Actually, I have something to do after school."

"Alright, but what is it that you have to do for you to decline such a kind offer from me?"

Chizuru had to agree that the offer was awfully kind of him and she was about to reply, but she thought he would just make fun of her for being a commoner, doing part time jobs and such. When she didn't reply, Kazama spoke up.

"What's so hard about telling me that you have a few part time jobs?"

"I'm so sorry, it's just thatâ€|" his words finally sunk in and she stopped, "wait, you knew?"

Kazama didn't reply; he only smirked in a way that seemed to say "who do you think I am?" \_Somehow, his status and connections are what scare me the most\_, Chizuru pointed out in her head. She has to remind herself to be extra careful around him from now on.

The two stayed in their positions for a while longer before the silence became too awkward to ignore for Chizuru. "U-um, if this is all for today, I would like to take my leave nowâ€|" Kazama studied the girl before nodding in approval.

"You can go now."

\* \* \*

><p>"You were gone for a long time. Did you get in trouble? Who am I

kidding, of course you got in trouble. Were you in <em>a lot</em> of trouble? Was he scary? He was, wasn't he? He is known as the "demon" after all. Did he hurt you? Or did he just yell at you? I'm really sorry! I should have gotten in trouble too, since I was the one who started talking to you. I'm really, really sorry! Are you okay? Did he make you cry?" Heisuke hurried to Chizuru's desk as soon as she sat down in her seat, drowning her in questions.

"Yeah, I'm fine. And it's not your fault; I was the one who yelled out loud. Thanks for worrying about me, Heisuke-kun," she smiled warmly. I'm happy that Heisuke-kun is here for me. I wouldn't know what to do if he wasn't. Heisuke was, without a doubt, the first friend Chizuru made at this school and she trusts him from the bottom of her heart. She knows that she can tell him everything, including today's events. "Listen, Heisuke-kun, there's something I have to tell youâ€|"

\* \* \*

><p>"What? Why didn't you tell me this sooner?" Heisuke asked as soon as Chizuru quieted down. He was silent the whole time she was talking, absorbing all the details Chizuru was telling him about, but he immediately freaked out as soon as she was done.<p>

"Well, he only asked me to join just now," Chizuru tried reasoning with her currently frustrated friend.

"No, I mean the part where you were kidnapped."

"Oh, that part. Well, it kind ofâ€|slipped my mind?" She was usually very honest, but she didn't want Heisuke to worry about her; she had no other choice but to keep it from him this morning. However, as the situation was somehow connected to her being elected as a member of the student council, she had to reveal the whole truth.

"Does something like that usually slip off of someone's mind?" he wondered out loud, immediately regretting it after noticing Chizuru's apologetic expression. "A-ah, I mean, I'm glad you told me about it before it was too late, you know? I'm really glad you trust me, so thanks." Hearing this, she brightened, to his relief.

"So, what are you going to do now?" Heisuke asked hesitantly, afraid of saying something stupid and causing Chizuru to frown again.

"I guess I'll do what they say, since I'm in the student council now." A moment of silence followed before he spoke again.

"Do you really believe that he's your childhood friend?" This time, Chizuru was the one to hesitate.

"I- I don't know. I don't remember anything about having a childhood friend, but my past has always been pretty hazy."

"You mean there's a chance that he is?" his voice rose unexpectedly and he quickly shut his mouth.

"Yeah, but it's weird, you know. The first time I saw his hair, his eyes, his facial features, I feel like I've seen them from somewhere before," Chizuru looked up while talking, as if she was reminiscing about her past. Looking up at the clear blue sky, she thought she

caught a glimpse of her past, but it quickly disappeared into the crisp air.

"Well, you know. There are a lot of people with golden blonde hair," Heisuke said, as if trying to convince himself that Chizuru doesn't have a close bond with the menacing president of the student council. She was too nice for the likes of him.

"That's true, but with red eyes?"

"Well, people wear contacts these days," Heisuke suggested. Everything Heisuke said was reasonable, but he didn't explain the reason why Kazama feels so nostalgic and familiar to Chizuru. "Look, Chizuru. You're thinking too much about this. If he really is your childhood friend, you'll remember naturally."

She looked at Heisuke, scanning his honest expression to see that he had a point. She really was thinking about this too much. Besides, from the beginning, she never did believe that she had a childhood friend, so why start now? If the truth unfolds and Kazama really is her childhood friend, then she'll believe it. She swallowed the strange feeling she had earlier and nodded to her friend. "Yeah, you're right, Heisuke-kun. Thanks for worrying about me so much. I really appreciate it!" Her sentence was finished off with a bright smile and he gladly returned it.

"You're welcome." He was glad that Chizuru was her usual happy self again. Up until this point in his life, he has never met anyone quite like her before. Chizuru is unique; she doesn't treat him like how all the other girls treat him. She's kind and hardworking and he loves that about her, but most of all, he loves her smile. When she smiled, her eyes sparkled like the stars up in the night sky. And even after just two days of being with her, he could tell that when she was really, really happy, her cheeks would flush. Her precious, precious smile was somewhat elegant, but cute. As her friend, he made a silent promise to himself that he would do anything to protect that smile.

\* \* \*

><p>Class was brought to an end by the sound of the last bell of the day, accompanied with the relieved sighs of many students, particularly the ones who didn't enjoy school. Packing her bag as quick as possible, Chizuru speed walked down the hallway. She couldn't afford to be late to her first part time job which starts in 15 minutes. She would have ran, but after having a decent conversation with Saitou today during lunch, she realized that he was in the disciplinary committee and she didn't want to get in trouble for running down the halls by him. If possible, she wanted to become good friends with Saitou. Plus, she had a feeling getting caught running in the halls by him would be pure torture.<p>

Upon reaching the pavement and coming into view of the entrance gate, she noticed a familiar looking man standing in a manner that looked as though he was waiting for someone. Around the man, both genders gathered in groups, trying their best to get his attention. \_It can't be\_ \_It didn't take long for her to realize that the man was none other than Kazama.

"Let's go," he said as soon as she reached the gate. His words that



were directed at Chizuru left the students around them both surprised and upset.

"But I told you that I didn't need a ride," Chizuru replied, trying her best to ignore the glares of the enraged female students.

"You never said I couldn't walk you home though."

After thinking back and reviewing their conversation in the student council office, she realized that the man was right. As much as she wanted to disagree and lie about it, she couldn't.

"I guess you can, but leave right when I get to my first part time job."

"I said that I'll walk you \_home.\_ I won't leave until you get home safely," his reply was resolute, allowing no space for argument. Looking into his eyes, Chizuru realized that she really had no right to reject him. He was just worried about her and if he really \_is\_ her childhood friend (which she still doubts), then he had a right to be worried. Sighing, she turned and began to walk in the direction of her part time job, hinting for him to follow. No doubt, this was going to be a very, very long evening.

\* \* \*

><p>Yeah, I'm taking this reeeeeaaaal slow. I'm sorry... Anyway, on another note, I hope you enjoyed this chapter as well! Feel free to review and provide tips and comments! You can talk about things you loved, things you liked, things you disliked, things you despised, things you want me to improve on, and etc! I look forward to your reviews!<p>

Anonymous reviews (Sorry if I missed any, but I try my best!):

Dear **\*\*Olivia\*\***: Vous saurez bientÃ´t! Haha, oui! Elle \_est\_ chanceuse! Merci pour lire le chapitre!

Dear **\*\*aizawa saki\*\***: I'm glad you liked the oneshot! Unfortunately, those bittersweet moments won't come until the later chapters, but please be patient! Along with that, Kazama will definitely appear more and more!

Dear **\*\*Guest\*\***: Omg I know what you mean! I always go for the bad boys cuz they're the hottest! :)

## 6. Chapter 5

Sorry for the long wait! I've been busy pigging out and watching the Olympics... Hehe. :) I'm kind of curious as to which countries you guys are rooting for. I'm personally rooting for a lot of countries: Canada, USA, Japan, China, South Korea, France, and Great Britain. I have my reasons. ^^ If you feel comfortable doing so, please leave a **\*\*review\*\*** and include which country/countries you are rooting for!

To make up for my lazy attitude, this chapter is longer than the others. A quick reminder that my **\*\* poll\*\*** is still up in case you haven't voted yet. I won't be taking that off for a while. School

starts in about a month and I will be getting busy pretty soon, but I'll still try my best to update!

I know I said that this story takes place in the SSL world, but really, I changed it so much that I don't even know what world this is. OTL I hope you all don't mind! I **\*\*apologize\*\*** to those who are expecting more of Yamazaki, Saitou, and Okita. I will definitely let those three shine eventually! Just wait for it! :)

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\* \* \*

><p>"Alright. Let me repeat your order: combo number three with a medium coke for take-out, correct? Thank you very much. That will beâ€|" Chizuru spoke politely towards, who she hoped, was the last customer of the day. Well, the last customer of the day at her <em>first<em> part time job at least. It's not that she hated her part time jobs, but after years of the same routine, she was really starting to feel the boredom of doing it. Still, she couldn't complain as the staff members were always there to support her and she really needed the money. Certainly, there were a few customers here and there who weren't asâ€|cooperative, but she had no time to fret over them. She sighed as the customer left and a new customer stepped up to the cash register. Chizuru was about to ask the customer in front of her what they wanted to order until someone stepped beside her.

"Don't worry, Chizuru. I got this," her fellow coworker who was also a high school student said, putting a reassuring hand on her shoulder.

Chizuru's eyes brightened up right away and she nodded in response. "Thanks!"

Chizuru changed back into her clothes in the change room, wondering if Kazama was still waiting for her. She quickly dismissed the thought. \_There's no way he'd still be there. I worked overtime today too. \_With how things turned out, Chizuru ended up working longer than she had expected. She made sure she had enough time to change and get to her next part time job, but she sure was cutting it close. Knowing how boring it must be to just sit and wait for her, she had told Kazama to leave if he wanted to earlier. \_He definitely left. \_No normal person, no matter how close a friend, would wait that long for someone.

Lightly stepping out of the change room, she waved a quick good bye to her coworkers before taking nimble and quick strides out of the fast food restaurant. She was about to sprint to her next workplace, a cafÃ© that was a couple blocks down the street, before she noticed a dark figure lurking behind her. Without thinking, she automatically spoke the first two words that were on her mind.

"Who's there?" she forced herself to put up a brave front. \_What if it's a pervert? \_Either way, she has to defend herself. She didn't have the confidence to win a fight, but the least she could do was act strong verbally. The figure stepped closer and Chizuru backed away on instinct. As the man stepped into the light, she realized that it was just Kazama.

"Oh, it's just you," Chizuru breathed out a sigh of relief.

"I scared you there, didn't I?" he smirked, expecting her to strongly disagree. He figured that the girl hated to admit defeat.

"Yes," she replied, with honesty written in her eyes. She didn't want to admit her fear to him, but if she wants even the slightest chance for him to stop his pranks, then she must tell the truth. Kazama was taken aback by her answer and he did feel the slightest bit of regret, an emotion that the people around him never found a way to make him feel. Kazama wasn't a man to apologize, but looking down at the fragile, yet strong, girl in front of him, pouting and showing the faintest blush on her cheeks, made him feel the need to apologize for once. "I'm sorry," hesitantly, he mumbled the two words. As the phrase rarely came out of Kazama's mouth, he felt strange saying it, but the expression Chizuru showed and the words she spoke next replaced the weird feeling with a relieved one. "It's okay," she smiled forgivingly, "just don't scare me again next time."

Seeing Chizuru's smile, he couldn't help but tease her again. He often teased her a lot when they were younger and he never really grew out of that habit. During the years they've lost contact, Kazama missed talking to Chizuru. He missed teasing her and observing her every reaction to his words. It was amusing, but he would never go as far as making her cry. To the young and reserved boy, Chizuru's tears brought a tight pain to his chest and he had never understood it as a kid, but he now knew that feeling to be worry.

For Chizuru to have pulled a prank back on Kazama wasn't a first. She had often done it as revenge, although he would always get his way in the end. Still, Chizuru had pretended to not know Kazama; that was a new one. For her to get so serious about a prank was something not to be laughed at; she must have gotten really tired of all of his pranks as a child and finally snapped. Was her latest prank her way of revenge after all these years? If so, then I must refrain from teasing her anymore than I already am. She may begin to hate me one day, although I doubt it, he thought smugly. Nothing could ruin his confidence when it came to winning Chizuru's heart.

"Are you going home now?" Kazama asked after completing his chain of thoughts. Although it wasn't very dark, it was already night time. He was getting impatient and couldn't help but feel the hunger take control of his temper.

"Nope, I still have one more place to go," she answered. "It's a cafe next."

"Why are you doing all of this?" his question was placed with impatience and that was that anger she heard in his voice?

"I'm sure you wouldn't understand," she replied. He really wouldn't. They were in different levels in the society. He had wealth, status, and connections while all she had was lower connections, with the townsfolk and whatnot. He wouldn't understand what it was like to have money, and then lose it all in a matter of seconds.

Kazama took a minute to take in the hints Chizuru was sending off. She didn't want to talk about the topic and it was obvious to him

that it had something to do with her new, less fortunate life. Being considerate was rare; he would rather act out of pity than kindness, but seeing Chizuru in low spirits definitely wasn't the most comfortable feeling for him. It's strange, as he didn't mind seeing other people unhappy, but Chizuru had always had a special place in his heart. Deciding not to inquire any further into this subject, he asked the second thing that was on his mind.

"What's your work schedule?"

She then explained to him that on weekdays, her schedule was comprised of two part time jobs each day. On Mondays and Tuesdays, she would work at a fast food restaurant before going to a caf   and on Wednesdays to Fridays, she would work at a supermarket before going to the same caf  . When he asked her about her homework and dinner, she told him that she somehow managed to squeeze it in between work shifts or during breaks and her dinner was taken care of by the caf  . Hearing that she still managed to eat, he was relieved, although he didn't show it. If the girl had gotten any skinnier than she already was, he was sure she would collapse from overworking herself.

Apparently, on weekends, she would try her best to finish all her homework before working at the caf  . Her schedule on weekends was less strict, she told him, as she had no specific time to arrive or leave work. All her manager said was "just try your best to come sometime around noon."

"Do you actually go at noon?" he wondered. He really wanted to find out more about the girl he had lost contact with for years. She has changed so much, yet some parts of her still remain unaffected.

"Of course! I don't want my manager to think I'm lazy. She gave me this wonderful job, so I'll do my very best to give back with all my might!" Chizuru uttered, determined to give it her all. Kazama couldn't help but watch as she smiled with assurance and before he knew it, he was staring. He admired the stubborn side of her, but her hardworking and confident side was also worth worshipping. Sure, he could be pretty serious when he was interested in something, but other than that, one would never find him determined. And he was pretty sure that Chizuru didn't really like the working part of her job, perhaps the interacting part, but definitely not the actual labour. He knew he had to do something to help her, but even if he did, it would take time for things to get settled. For once in his whole life, Kazama thought about how he could truly help someone else, rather than just helping out of pure pity and annoyance.

"Chizuru," he started, immediately snapping Chizuru out of her mental schedule of jobs, "I'll walk you home for the next few days."

"What?" she blurted out, not quite catching what he had said. Had she heard him wrong? Was Kazama acting out of ... benevolence? "Could you please say that again?"

"Don't make me repeat myself. Didn't you hear it the first time?" She was really playing around with his patience.

"No, in fact, I didn't. That's why I asked you to say-"

"I said I'll walk you home for the next few days," he sighed. The longer they took with this, the longer their conversation would be. Well, it's not like he hated talking to her, but he really did want to change the topic. Talking about one thing for too long can get quite tedious.

"Wait, why?" She really didn't understand why he would do such a thing. Did he have that much time on his hands to spare?

"Why not? Talking to you like this is nice. I rather do this than ride the car home," he smirked, keeping his eyes on the sidewalk in front of them as he continued walking.

You mean 'limo,' Chizuru mentally corrected his minor, or should she say major, mistake. However, maybe to Kazama, the limousine he came in was merely just a car and he has a larger and fancier limousine that he actually considered as a limousine.

"Are you sure you want to walk like this every day though?" still unsure, she confirmed with the man.

"I didn't say I would be doing this every day."

"Then, until when?"

"Until I get someâ€| matters settled," he answered, giving her a look to prevent her from asking any more questions. Taking the hint, she shut her mouth, albeit hesitantly, and continued to do so until they reached the cafÃ© she worked at.

\* \* \*

><p>"One strawberry shortcake with a medium coffee. Ah, and you would like it black, right?" Chizuru asked cheerfully.<p>

"Yes, thank you Chizuru-chan," the customer replied. Chizuru offered a quick and final smile before she hopped back into the kitchen, giving the order to the pastry chef in the kitchen. Upon coming out of the kitchen, she felt a firm hand on her wrist. She turned around to see that the hand belonged to Kazama, who had chosen the closest seat to the entrance of the kitchen. She looked at him, confusion written all over her face.

"What is it, Kazama-sama? I'm working right now." She hadn't realized that she had called him "Kazama-sama" again until she saw the look of vexation cross his face. She wanted to take it back, but what could she say? If he didn't want her to call him "Kazama-sama," then what did he want her to call him by?

After a moment of silence, he spoke. "Never mind. I'll wait until you finish work." Just then, his phone rang and he released her wrist to reach his cell phone. Although Kazama's hand wasn't too strong on the grip, she couldn't help but thank his phone for ringing at that moment. Flipping his phone open, Kazama checked the caller ID before sighing exhaustedly. Walking around the neighbourhood and sitting down, doing nothing but wait, can get pretty boring. Well, she had warned him from the start! It's not her fault that he's tired now!

"Looks like they want me back. Those fools, they can't do anything without me," he muttered disgustingly, as though he was talking about a pack of annoying flies that keep swarming around no matter how much insect repellent he sprays.

"H-huh? Oh, is that right?" She didn't even think about Kazama's job as the heir of his family. Sure, he had wealth and status, but he still had his own responsibilities to worry about. "Since they're expecting you, you should go."

Kazama was silent; she couldn't tell what he was thinking. The silence was excruciating, but he finally spoke. "I'll send a nicer car for you tomorrow. Be careful on your way home." Chizuru nodded and said many thanks to him for the day as he rose to his feet and walked out the door without saying another word. She waved to him, even though she knew he wouldn't turn back to look at her. Sighing after he exited, she went back to work, delivering the strawberry shortcake and coffee to the regular customer that had ordered it earlier. Unknown to her, the figure that left not too long ago remained outside the small café, eyes never leaving Chizuru. He stayed that way until the driver of the limousine, that had followed them during the course of the day's events undiscovered, walked up to him and reported that it was way over time to head home.

During the rest of the night's events, Chizuru couldn't help but keep wondering if the "nicer car" Kazama had mentioned would be an actual car or a limousine. The next morning, rather expectedly, she woke up to a limousine parked outside her tiny home.

\* \* \*

><p>"What? You went home with <em>that<em> Kazama Chikage?" Okita nearly choked when Chizuru finished explaining the whole story to her small group of friends. "Wow, Chizuru-chan. I knew you were a brave woman, but you sure went over my expectations." He smiled and put a lazy arm around her shoulders, intentionally pulling her closer to him.

"Hey, Souji! Don't do that to Chizuru! Who knows what germs you carry when you hang out with so many other women!" Heisuke immediately pulled Chizuru back from the larger man and dusted off the invisible bacteria that he believed the other male had.

"Are you jealous? And how many times have I told you to call me Souji-senpai?" Okita fought back, glaring at Heisuke when he saw him attempt to clean Chizuru off where he had touched her. Heisuke should know better; Okita's sparks of love don't rub off that easily.

"No, why would I be? And how would I remember that?" Heisuke shrieked.

"Eight times since the start of school," Yamazaki suddenly appeared. "Sorry I'm late. I had to help Sannan-sensei with something first."

"Oh, that's right. You became his assistant, right? Man, that job is pretty hard to get! You're only a first year and you were about to get it! Nice, man!" Heisuke grinned sheepishly.

"Well, I was only officially accepted yesterday," he affirmed with a

light blush slowly creeping its way to his cheeks.

"Maybe it has something to do with your family excelling as medics," Okita said. "It's all connections."

"Okita-senpai, I'm sure Yamazaki-san is very skillful as well," Chizuru tried to stop the conversation from heading to the "my family has all this" side. True, Chizuru was quite proud of her family, but others might not be, and they might even think of their family as a burden. Who knows, maybe Yamazaki was someone like that.

"Don't worry, Yukimura-san. I'm fine, but thank you," he smiled. Although he had made it clear by words that he wasn't bothered by what Okita said, she realized that he had brightened up after what Chizuru said. Knowing this, she offered a bright smile in return.

"Oh, right." Heisuke suddenly straightened up. "SAITOU! YOU TOOK OFF MARKS FOR ME THIS MORNING!" He pointed accusingly with a shaking finger at the man who has been eating silently all this time.

"You deserved it," he said, expressionless. "Your uniform was untidy."

"BUT I ALWAYS DRESS LIKE THIS!"

"Then would you like me to deduct marks for you every day?" he finally looked up, challenging Heisuke. Even though the younger man was standing up, he suddenly felt inferior to Saitou.

Chizuru watched as Heisuke slowly shrunk into a pulp under Saitou's influential glare and giggled. Her friends at Kazama High were funny and they all had different characteristics that made each and one of them unique. She was reminded of her old friends back at her junior high school: Risa, Nana, and the rest of the gang. She made a mental note to herself to make a quick phone call to Risa during her break at work. Of course, she would have to ask for permission to borrow the phone first since she doesn't have a cell phone. Calling when she got home wasn't an option either, because she was afraid Risa might be busy or already asleep.

"Hey, Chizuru-chan. Are you still on a diet?" Heisuke asked, eying her small lunch. Chizuru didn't know what he was talking about, but then she remembered the excuse she had given him when he asked why her lunch was so small on the first day. She smiled and answered.

"Heisuke-kun, a diet isn't supposed to be a short term thing." Just then, a voice was heard over the P.A. system.

"Yukimura Chizuru, please come to the student council office immediately." The message was repeated before the area was quiet again.

Everyone looked over at Chizuru, expecting her to explain something. They all wondered if she was in trouble again, excluding Heisuke, who was already informed about her joining the council.

"Well, I better go now," she quickly packed her lunch, although to be honest, there really wasn't that much to pack into her bag, and stood

up. "Oh, and if you didn't already know, I joined the student council." With those as her last words, she closed the door to the rooftop with Yamazaki, Okita, and even Saitou gawking at her. Heisuke was not even the least bit grazed by her words. "WHAT?"

\* \* \*

><p>"From now on, you don't have to bring a lunch," Kazama declared curtly as soon as she entered his office. She had knocked twice, but no one opened the door for her nor was she welcomed in by a voice. She decided that since she was now a member, she had the privilege to walk in without permission. When she walked in, she was surprised and slightly upset to see the president sprawled on the couch, intently waiting for her arrival.<p>

"What? I'll starve then!" Chizuru couldn't help but raise her voice. What he was asking for was crazy! "I mean, sure I don't eat much, but I still need to eat!" It was more like she couldn't afford much, but she left that part out intentionally; it wouldn't help much in this situation anyway.

"You don't have to bring a lunch; I'll bring one for you," he continued. He didn't understand why she would freak out like that. He finally had the chance to stay with Chizuru now; he would never allow her to suffer. If only she had let him finish talking, then a misunderstanding would have never risen. Chizuru was much too impatient for her own good sometimes, although he did find that part of her cute.

Chizuru was dumbfounded. Was he acting out of pity or was he truly concerned about her?

"It's quite alright. I can take care of myself."

"You say that even though you struggle with balancing education and work?" he started. "Chizuru, it's an order. Stop wasting your money on lunch and just come eat with me." He knew that Chizuru would decline his offer straight away, because that was just the type of girl he knew her to be. However, she would never disobey an official order from the student council president. He was pleased when he saw the look of panic cross her face, but the next words she spoke went against the expression she was showing.

"You've already decided to walk me home. I cannot intrude on your time and efforts any longer," Chizuru asserted earnestly. Sure, she had financial problems and a free lunch every day would help, but she hated relying on people. She believed that using her own efforts were what mattered the most. Besides, eating with Kazama would mean separating from Heisuke and the rest during lunch time and sadly, Chizuru barely sees Okita, Saitou, and Yamazaki as it is. In fact, other than lunch time, Chizuru couldn't find a better time to meet. Hopping in and imposing on their time would seem much too intimate on her behalf.

"Listen, Chizuru," he refrained from using the term "woman" since the one he was speaking to was his beloved childhood friend. "This is an order. Do you understand what that means?" His tone was stern, but not quite the same bitter tone he used towards everyone else. Even when he was ticked off, Chizuru was still important to him, but a little scaring here and there would teach her back into place. Seeing



her gulp nervously proved to him that his little threat had worked.

"Y-yes," she paused for a bit to think of her next comeback, "but I believe that ordering someone such as I to profit off of you isn't a very merit-gaining thing to do." Her answer was spoken matter-of-factly, but it wasn't even close to wavering Kazama's true intentions. What she said was true; he wouldn't gain anything from feeding her, but what he wanted from Chizuru wasn't money or status (not that she had any of that anymore), but Chizuru herself.

"If all I wanted was money, don't you think I would have given up by now?" The question persuaded Chizuru to think a bit longer. It's true that he already knows about the situation that she's currently living in, so then what did he want from her?

"Here," the man spoke up, snapping her out of her field of confusion. On the tea table, plates of food that seemed to sparkle in Chizuru's eyes were placed. "Today's selection is Italian food. Help yourself."

Had he not heard her earlier? She had already made it clear to him that she would not eat! The food does look tasty though! She never took her eyes off of the expensive looking food and noticing this, Kazama smirked. No matter what her words said, her expression proved it all. It must have been ages since Chizuru has last eaten such delicious looking food! Despite her stomach's loud calls or her mind's attempt at getting her hands to grab the fork and knife placed in front of her, her body would not move.

"What's wrong? Could it be that you want me to feed you?" Kazama's head tilted to the side as he watched the hungry, yet stubborn, girl resist the urge to eat.

"H-huh? N-no thanks!" Chizuru realized that he had been staring at her the whole time and quickly looked away from Kazama and the food.

"If you don't eat by yourself, I'll feed you."

Can't I just not eat?

"Oh, and if you don't eat, I won't let you out."

She gawked at Kazama, amazed that he could tell what she was thinking. Hold on, isn't that bad on my part? Kazama watched as her surprised expression quickly turned into a pout and chuckled. He could read Chizuru like a book.

"F-fine," Chizuru mumbled after a while, "I'll eat."

Kazama smirked his signature smirk and watched as she grabbed her fork and paused. "What do I eat?"

"Anything you like."

Well, when he puts it like that! Chizuru poked at the closest thing on the plate and plopped it into her mouth. It's delicious! Without any further thoughts, Chizuru began to eat to her heart's content. When was the last time she had tasted delicacies such as

this? With each bite, Chizuru melted. She hadn't noticed that Kazama was still there until he spoke.

"Chizuru," his voice rung through her head like a bell and she stopped eating.

"Ah! Sorry, I got out of control, but it's really deli-"

"About yesterdayâ€|" What? So he wasn't mad that she began eating without him? "Youâ€|"

"Yes?" What could he have wanted to talk about? Her curiosity must have gotten the better of her, because her voice was hopeful and impatient.

"Never mind."

"Okay." She sighed; she had gotten so worked up over nothing. \_No, it's not nothing. He really \_did\_ look like he had wanted to ask me something, but I wonder whatâ€| \_Kazama never hesitated, \_ever\_. For him to think so hard was indeed something Chizuru should not overlook.

\* \* \*

><p>"Thank you very much for the foodâ€| it was delicious," Chizuru bowed in gratitude. She had finally agreed to eat with the president during every lunch period after a couple more threats from him. Was this how he got people to do things for him? Then again, if anything, having him bring a spare lunch for her could only benefit her. Her thoughts suddenly bounced back to the conversation she had with the president earlier. As she wondered what in the world Kazama had wanted to say before, she made her way down the halls in preparation for her next class.<p>

\* \* \*

><p>"Chizuru-chan, in the end you never came back," Heisuke walked up to her desk as soon as he entered the classroom, a hint of loneliness apparent in his voice.<p>

"I'm sorry, it's just that from now on, I don't think I'll be able to eat with you guys for a while." She felt really bad. It was Heisuke and everyone who had invited her to eat with them on the first day. Not only did she take their kindness for granted, but now, she has to leave them and it's only the third day of school! She wanted to stay with them a bit longer since she almost never got to see Okita, Yamazaki, or Saitou (and to think that Saitou was just starting to grow on her).

"Did that Kazama guy tell you to stop hanging out with us?" The question dropped a heavy mood into the atmosphere and Chizuru had to quickly clear the misunderstanding before the mood became even darker.

"No, no, no. Nothing of the sort! As a matter of fact, all he did was offer to bring a lunch for me every day."

Chizuru would personally call it "force" rather than "offer," but giving too much detail would just worry the already displeased boy.

She noticed Heisuke's tense face relax a bit, albeit not all the way. "Then isn't it fine to take the lunch and come eat with us?" That was an option, but Kazama did say "come eat with me" and it seemed quite rude to just take the lunch and leave. "Heisuke-kun, I don't think it works that way." Chizuru managed to say amidst all her averse thoughts.

Heisuke sighed; he couldn't help but agree. Just taking her lunch and saying "well, see you later!" was doubtlessly wrong. Still, the feeling of losing Chizuru, whether it's at lunch time or for good, was already beginning to make its way into his mind. Before, when it was just the four of them, the atmosphere was lively, but at the same time, nothing seemed to mix in right. Heisuke and Okita argued back and forth while Yamazaki and Saitou did nothing to stop it. Having Chizuru there seemed to balance everything out. As soon as the two of them start fighting, she would stop them. When Yamazaki and Saitou were too quiet, she would try her best to get a word or two out of them.

He never told her this, but he could see in everyone's eyes that they really enjoyed having Chizuru's company around. Even the reserved Saitou was starting to get used to her. It's only been three days, but those three days have been a blessing to him. He knew that it wasn't a big deal and he would still see her during class, but class was like a library in all sorts of ways: no talking, no laughing, and no distractive actions. Lunch was their big break that gave them a chance to communicate and interact.

He knew how the other guys would feel when they hear about this.

"Well, I guess I don't really mind since I'll still see you, but the guys won't be as forgiving." He brushed off all his selfish thoughts and focused on the important ones, shoving his hands in his pockets as a sign to prove his comment.

"I know."

Heisuke scanned her face, for the first time noticing her disappointed expression. Was she disappointed in herself? "Hey, look. It's fine, you know. You'll see everyone around the halls. Yamazaki's just in the next class over during homeroom and I'm sure if you ever head over to the infirmary, you'll see him. Souji's on another floor, but he'll come cruising by, skipping class and whatnot. Saitou's on the disciplinary committee, so you'll see him in the morning or around the halls when it's his turn to do his job." Heisuke tried his best to cheer the girl up. He really didn't like it when she was depressed and his previous comments didn't help at all, but what he just said seemed to have done the trick. He watched as her frown turned upwards and he smiled too.

"Yeah, you're right. I'm really sorry. In the end, I guess it's no big deal." Chizuru had to resist the urge to laugh at herself, thinking that missing a simple lunch break every day would change her relationship with everyone. If worse comes to worst, she can just askâ€|\_beg\_ Kazama to let her eat with everyone else.

Who knows, maybe by that time, he might decide that he's had enough of her.

\* \* \*

><p>I hope you liked it! Sorry for my mistakes. :( Oh, and don't forget to <strong>review</strong>~

Now, time for my response to those who have reviewed anonymously (By the way, I know it's annoying how I put this at the end of the chapter, but I don't want to put it in the beginning 'cause... I don't know. I just feel like putting this at the end. I'm a strange person, yes.) :

Dear **\*\*Olivia\*\***: If you don't mind, from now on, I will reply in English, but I encourage you to continue reviewing in French. ^^ The reason she forgot Kazama will be revealed soon. Heisuke hasn't realized it yet, but he will eventually fall in love with Chizuru. Haha, I agree. I completely forgot about Okita, Saitou, and Yamazaki. I have included Okita in this chapter, but I will definitely include him more in the future. Haha, Kazama didn't get to see her house. That's too bad, but he will eventually! Thank you for reading and reviewing as always! :)

Dear **\*\*Stalianha\*\***: I'm so glad you liked it! I don't want to reveal too much information, but the reason she forgot Kazama will be explained soon. I really appreciate you commenting in English for me. It helps a lot! Thank you! Why can't you write one? Is it because you don't have an account? I really encourage you to write one! Even if it's in French, I will definitely read it! Once again, thank you for reading and reviewing! :)

P.S. Special thanks to **\*\*Pandora's Socks\*\*** (ID) for your help!

## 7. Chapter 6

Hello! I'm back again! How has everyone been?

A quick reminder that my **\*\*poll\*\*** is still up. I know I'm really annoying, but it's really interesting to see, so it'd be nice if those who have not already voted would vote. ^^

\*The fantastic four (I'm officially naming Heisuke, Saitou, Yamazaki, and Okita that from now on) don't appear in this chapter. Sorry, fans! .

Please read and review! ^^

**\*\*Disclaimer**: I do not own Hakuouki or any of its properties. **\*\***

\* \* \*

><p>It was after school and Chizuru knew what that meant: time to meet up with Kazama and go to work. While not necessarily hating the fact that she was going to be with Kazama again, the thought of staying side by side with him for more than 10 minutes was suffocating. The man had such an intimidating aura around him that seemed to say "you'll regret it if you get too close." His level of authority was indeed something not to be laughed at and Chizuru has already felt enough power from him for a life time. From the way he's worshiped and feared at school to the free rides to school she has been given, everything just screamed out "rich." Her family used to

have that kind of power as well, but time can really change people. Now, she just can't get used to the same rich atmosphere anymore. However, he has his good points too, like the fact that he had wanted to ensure her safety. That seemed normal enough, except for the fact that she was almost a mere nobody while he was the most popular guy at school. What would he get from acting nice to her anyway?<p>

As she packed her workbooks into her bag, she felt a hand tap her lightly on the shoulder. She spun around and saw that the hand belonged to a fellow female classmate of hers.

"Um, Yukimura-san," the girl started off.

"Chizuru's fine," she smiled warmly, hoping she didn't appear too rash or familiar since it was only the third day of school.

"Chi- Chizuru-san," the girl corrected herself after Chizuru's friendly suggestion, "Um, I'm from your class. My name is Shizuka."

"Yes, I know." By now, she had memorized all the names and faces of her classmates. She knew everyone by heart and even knew what kind of personality they had, although it was just an estimate. According to Chizuru's observations, Shizuka was usually a quiet girl, either reading or chatting politely with her friends. She was very smart, although she was especially strong in literacy, probably thanks to her love for books. Chizuru knew that she had to be extra gentle with this girl in order to be friends with her. Chizuru smiled as politely as she could.

"Oh, you know me? Th- that's good." She was stuttering which confused Chizuru. Did Shizuka always stutter when talking or was she just nervous? She doesn't seem to be the type to be hesitant when speaking, so it must be the latter.

"Um, is there something bothering you, Shizuka-san?" She tried her best to make eye contact with Shizuka. After all, eyes always speak the truth.

"Actually, yes."

Chizuru's ears perked up, ready to listen to whatever problems Shizuka had to share.

"Yesterday, you left the school with Kazama-samaâ€|"

\_Ah, so this is what it's aboutâ€|\_

"Listen, it's not what it looks like between us." Chizuru was desperate to erase whatever misunderstandings Shizuka had about yesterday's incident. If people were to think that Kazama was giving her special treatment, they would all turn against her. That thought alone suddenly sent chills down her back. Having the whole school against her was something Chizuru would never want to experience.

"Oh, really?" Although Shizuka tried to hide it, the sudden rise in her tone did not fail to reach Chizuru's sharp ears. "Great!"

\_Yes, great! She believes me! \_Chizuru mentally sighed in her head.

She had avoided high school drama for now. Well, even if she were to accidentally get caught in a scandal, she would just tell them that she has nothing to do with Kazama. \_I'm sure that's for the best.\_

A thought rang in her head all of a sudden. If she was to continue staying near Kazama, his reputation was bound to drop. Chizuru could see it already: "A commoner dares request Kazama Chikage to walk her home" on the front lines of the school newspaper, but since it's Kazama, it's not surprising to her if the topic was to make it on the local, or even national, newspaper. And since she's just a commoner now, the public would never believe her if she told them that Kazama was the one who had requested (more like forced) to walk with her.

Shizuka coming up to ask Chizuru just now had successfully proven that people would suspect her for blackmailing Kazama or something. She had to make it clear to everyone that there is absolutely nothing going on between them. Either that, or she quits the student council, but that's not really an option, considering Kazama's the president. Chizuru's jumbled thoughts entangled her mind in a maze and she wasn't able to stop thinking about what disasters may fall onto her until Shizuka snapped her out of it.

"Chizuru-san?"

"Oh, yes?" She looked down at the girl who was slightly more petite than her. She looked so fragile that Chizuru had to check twice about what she was going to say to the girl, afraid she might make her cry.

"Well, how did you do it?" She sounded more cheerful now and Chizuru was glad, although she had no idea what the girl was talking about.

"I'm sorry, but what do you mean?"

"You know what I'm talking about! How did you get Kazama to walk with you? He would always shoo away anyone who get too close to him with his glare."

"Really? He doesn't seem \_that\_ bad around meâ€|" Chizuru was telling the truth. Although Kazama had a scary look in his eyes, it wasn't that bad as to chase her away.

"Then, you must be strong. Either that or he treats you especially better, but we all know that that's impossible." Wow, Shizuka sure talks a lot when you get to know her. In Chizuru's case, she has only known her for a couple of minutes, but she's already talking like they're best friends. So much for Chizuru's observations. Chizuru was so engaged in her new perspective of Shizuka that she didn't even hear what Shizuka had said.

\* \* \*

><p>She was late. <em>She<em> was \_late\_. She was almost never late, but here she was, running for her life, literally, towards the school gate. When it came to Kazama, one mistake and your life is in danger. Who knows what scary punishments he might give her if she were to anger him?

Making her way through the crowd, she stopped right in front of the demon. Bending over, she struggled to catch her breath.

"I'm so sorry I'm late!" Her attempt at talking failed as she continued to inhale and exhale quickly. No reply came. \_Could he be so angry that he doesn't even want to talk to me?\_ Still hunched over, she waited for her punishment to come. Would he hit her in front of all these people? Would that ruin his reputation? No, people would just think that she did something really bad and deserved it. Somehow, everything they did together only ended up being her fault in the public's eyes. She had to admit that Kazama had a serious influence on her life, to her displeasure.

Looking up, she was prepared to face the supposedly angry man, but was only met with a pair of indifferent eyes.

"Let's go."

\* \* \*

><p>It's excruciating. What is, you ask? The air around Kazama is. They've been walking for about a couple of minutes and they still have a long way to go before they reach Chizuru's (first) workplace. Yesterday was bad enough, but today seemed to be even worse. <em>He must be mad after all. <em>She tried to find an opening in the silent treatment she was receiving to apologize, but every time she tried to open her mouth, no words would come out. Chizuru was terrified of what would happen to her next. She snuck a peek at Kazama from the corner of her eyes, catching a glimpse of a sigh that had just escaped from his mouth. "What is it?"

Chizuru straightened up and quickly looked away. How did he know she was looking at him? "Um, n- nothing. It's just thatâ€¦" she stuttered. Kazama looked patiently at her, expecting her to continue. He always had enough time to listen to what Chizuru had to say. Most of the time, the words that came out of her mouth were quite amusing to him.

Chizuru gulped, but she didn't stop. "I want to apologize again."

"For making me wait." He said, as if completing Chizuru's unspoken words. She nodded, hoping he will forgive her. Then again, he was the one who wanted to tag along. However, the more she thought about it, the more she understood that she was doubtlessly at fault this time.

"I don't forgive you."

"Oh, thank you so much for under- what?" It was a norm for her that once she apologized, people would automatically forgive her, but this time was different. She had apologized, \_twice\_! Yet he was still mad! "Well, I'm very sorry for being late, but I couldn't help it," she had to force the words out. Talking to Kazama like this was not a very wise choice, but when Chizuru's angry, she's determined to have her way. "A classmate of mine stopped me when I was-"

"I'm not mad because of that." Then what was he mad at?

"Oh? Then, why \_are\_ you mad?" She inquired bravely, forgetting who

she was talking to for a second. Kazama turned his head to take a good look at her. She was pouting with that adorable frown of hers. She was one of the few people who he allowed to act rashly towards him. In fact, when it comes to acting childish and stubbornly, she may be the only one. Truthfully, he found her cute when she was unsatisfied.

"I don't care if you're late, but anyone who wastes our precious time together will receive proper punishment to atone for it," he replied stiffly.

\_Doesn't that basically mean he's mad because I'm late? \_Chizuru couldn't help but wonder. He has a good reason to be mad though and for that, she decided to apologize once more. "I- I'm sorry," she said.

"If you think I'll forgive you with just an apology, then you're wrong, Chizuru."

"Please forgive me. I'll do anything!" Her voice was desperate, responding accurately with her emotions. She was indeed desperate to make it up to the president; her high school life is on the line here!

"I'll think about it," he answered, gazing up into the sky while doing so, as if the answer he's looking for is up there. Chizuru hated the sound of that. If she gave him too much time to think about it, he's going to come up with a punishment so harsh, she wouldn't even be able to do it. At least that's what she thinks.

\* \* \*

><p>Chizuru practically threw off her work clothes as she scurried to put on her own. Running outside, she saw Kazama sitting at the exact place she had left him. "Sorry for making you wait." It was the fourth time she's apologized to Kazama today. She had called Risa earlier and told her all about her high school, how she was making friends and the like. What she didn't tell her wasâ€¦ well, pretty much everything regarding Kazama. She didn't want to make her best friend worry about her. She eventually lost track of time as the two friends began to chat and catch up on what's new with each other, which was the reason she was late. "Did you stay here the whole time?"<p>

He stood up and dusted his pants off, a sigh of relief audible to her ears. "No, I walked around the area and did a little shopping."

Chizuru looked at him and then at the area around him. He wasn't carrying any shopping bags, nor were there any on the floor next to him. "Umâ€¦ are you sure you didn't forget to bring the stuff you bought with you?" He's rich, so who knows? He probably gets his people to do the shopping for him usually.

Kazama wanted to roll his eyes at Chizuru, but that would just be rude. Besides, such an action was eye straining; it was much too troublesome for him. "It's in the car."

"What car?"



Chizuru's eyes followed his fingertip as he pointed towards a black limousine. \_Carâ€¦\_ She wasn't surprised; she had to admit that she was getting used to the man now, including all his luxuries.

"I had the car that usually follows us around carry my bags."

Yupp, she was getting used to everything now. Getting picked up in the morning by a limo, being followed by oneâ€¦ Hold on, being followed... ?

"Erâ€¦ what do you mean by following us?" She asked, just to make sure she hadn't heard incorrectly.

"You don't think that someone such as I would just walk out here all by myself, do you?" Okay, that was true. "Besides, if an emergency were to come up, it would be much more convenient to have a car nearby to use," he said, as though he was presenting his ideas for a company's new product.

And here she thought Kazama was starting to get used to a commoner's life too. \_Oh well, if Kazama-sama isn't the strategic and rich president I know, then he isn't Kazama-sama.\_ As she continued to think about how Kazama-like his actions were, the man himself walked over to the "car" and opened the door. Still clouded by her thoughts, Chizuru followed him and when he gestured for her to go in, she did.

Just as the motor of the car began to start, she realized what situation she was in. "Where are we going?" she demanded.

"To the cafÃ© you work at. Where else?" Kazama responded plainly. "Since we wasted so much time, you're going to be late. It's faster this way, don't you agree?"

"Well, I- I guess so." She mentally smacked herself; why hadn't she thought of that any sooner? She was intelligent, but when that intelligence wasn't used for her common sense, it was practically useless. As she sunk in her seat, Kazama watched, clearly amused.

\* \* \*

><p>"Ow!" Chizuru yelped in pain and stared down at her blood, oozing out of the cut the piece of porcelain had made. A customer had accidentally broken a tea cup (what a shame, it was one of the cafÃ©'s rarest tea cups too) and Chizuru was currently trying to clean up the area.<p>

"Um, waitress-san, I'll help you," the customer offered.

"No, no. Don't worry about it. Besides, if I were to see our precious customers injure themselves in front of me, it would trouble me deeply." No, she had not rehearsed these lines, but what she \_did\_ rehearse was the motto of the cafÃ©: "Be considerate and kind towards the customers, always." Allowing the customer to do her work would just beâ€¦ low of her. She had a great reputation in the cafÃ© and if it was to lower because of something like this, she would regret it later on.

"You're bleeding though!" The customer reminded her. It wasn't that she had completely forgotten about the pain she was feeling in her

right index finger, it's just that her mind was so absorbed in not losing her position and cleaning up the mess that it might have just slipped her mind.

"Don't worry about something like this. I will treat it as soon as I can." She smiled, looking up at her customer briefly before focusing on the task in front of her again.

\* \* \*

><p>"What was the loud ruckus about earlier?"<p>

"Oh, a customer just broke a tea cup, that's all." The two of them were walking back to Chizuru's house. (She didn't forget about the limousine that was trailing behind them though.) Although Kazama was busy due to an urgent matter yesterday, he apparently had nothing to do today, so he fulfilled his promise of walking her all the way home.

"Is that it?" He sounded as if there was something he wanted her to tell him, but she had told him all of it already.

"Umâ€¦ yes?" She wasn't even sure herself anymore.

"Then what is that wound you have on your finger?"

"My finger?â€¦ Oh!" She suddenly remembered as she lifted her index finger up to her chest level. She had completely forgotten about it if it weren't for his reminder just now. She had washed the wound earlier and she figured that it would have stopped bleeding right there and then. \_I guess I was wrong,\_ she thought, looking down at the dried blood around her wound. She was about to bring the cut to her mouth, with the intention of licking the blood off, when a hand grabbed hold of hers, guiding her index finger to a pair of soft lips. She had no time to react. She gasped sharply as she felt the warm wetness of his tongue on her cut. "What are you doing, Kaza-ah!" She hissed in pain as she felt him suck on the wound, drawing more blood from it. Was it just her or was the sucking unnecessary? He didn't seem like he was treating her cut gently either, which was what people would normally do to the injured. Was he irritated?

As soon as she started thinking and stopped talking, he stopped teasing the wound. \_Is he trying to tell me not to complain? \_Chizuru wondered and obediently stayed silent. Although she couldn't complain, she had to resist the urge to jump each time his tongue stroked the cut. She suddenly realized what kind of situation she was in and a faint blush started to make its way across her cheeks.

After a few more seconds, Kazama's mouth parted ways from her skin. Her wound was wet with saliva now. If it was her saliva, she wouldn't have minded, but it was his; that was what bothered her the most. Her wet wound felt refreshing as the chilly wind blew around them. She had always wondered why it felt so much cooler when the wind blew on wet skin rather than dry skin. She didn't realize that she had been staring at her cut until she heard a smirk. She lifted her head to find the source of the voice smiling smugly at her.

"What? Did you enjoy it that much?"

"N-no!" She declined a little bit too quickly. The light rosy colour on her cheeks darkened, which only added to the suspicion.

"You..." Kazama shoved his previous teasing tone aside and was suddenly serious. Although Chizuru was still startled from the incident just now, she looked up attentively, waiting for him to continue. "Youâ€¦ Never mind, I'll ask you later." Chizuru only nodded. \_I wonder what he wants to talk about.\_ He's been trying to tell Chizuru something since yesterday at work and he tried once again during lunch today, but he never got the chance to get his message across. She was really curious now, but if he claims that he'll tell her later, then she has no reason to object.

\* \* \*

><p>"Chizuruâ€¦|"<p>

"Yes?"

"This isâ€¦ your house?" The two of them were now standing in front of the small condominium she currently resides in, looking up at the building. He had requested to see the place Chizuru had spent the rest of her life at after the incident with her family and she not-so-reluctantly brought him up to the front yard of the condo. And to be honest, it wasn't really much of a front yard.

"No, my house is this way." She led Kazama up the stairs to her part of the condominium, but turned around to face him when they got in front of the door. "Well, I guess this is where we part. I'm home, so you don't have to worry anymore."

"Chizuru, remember when you said you'd do anything for me?"

"When did I say that?"

"When you apologized."

Chizuru mouthed an "oh" before realizing why he brought that up. "You want to go inâ€¦" It wasn't a question; she already knew that he wanted to. Kazama had that slanted smile that seemed to be a replacement for a smirk placed on his face and Chizuru knew that she had hit the spot.

Searching through her bag for her keys, she smiled when she finally found them. She opened the door and paused, giving the man a good long look before hesitantly inviting him in.

Kazama took a close look around her home, examining and absorbing in every last detail. \_This\_ was the place she had been staying at for the past decade. \_This\_ was the place that had changed Chizuru into what she is today. \_This\_ is all she has left after losing her family, her wealth, and her place that belonged only to her in society. It must have been such a big difference for her, the Yukimura mansion and the tiny... room she's currently living in.

He unconsciously began to stare at Chizuru, finally noticing how much she has grown. Her hair was always kept long, but after all these years, her hair has grown even more. Her facial and body features have grown more feminine, and she has noticeably matured. She was no longer as whiney as she was as a child, although that childish side

of her was still there. Her surroundings have changed drastically, affecting some parts of her, but other parts remain unchanged.

He was surprised by her bravery to put up with everything. Knowing Chizuru, she must have cried for a little while before finally getting used to it. Kazama couldn't help but empathize with her. He thought of Chizuru dearly and was truly proud of her for working so hard. He was also disgusted by what has happened to her. Although he was mad when he first found out, he wasn't allowed to investigate any further into Chizuru, which annoyed him more than anything. Why wasn't he allowed to know more about the girl he cared the most about? If he knew who took everything away from Chizuru, he'd make arrangements to punish them right away, whether it be physical torture or by taking away their most prized possessions, he'd do it. He'd do anything for Chizuru.

"Would you like some tea?" Chizuru looked over at Kazama, slightly taken aback that he had been staring at her. Her hands were hovering over the water boiler and she already had the tea leaves ready. She had gotten a couple of different samples from the café she worked at as a gift for her dedication. She hasn't tried any of them yet; she planned on saving them for her friends when they came over, \_ if \_ they come over.

"No." Kazama had a hint of anger in his tone. Thinking about everything that Chizuru has been through was really pissing him off. Out of impulse and fury, he blurted out something that he could not even imagine how painful it would be for Chizuru to hear. "Can you even afford tea?" He immediately closed his mouth and examined her face for any incoming signs of tears, however he didn't see any. He only got a slight bitter smile in return.

Chizuru realized how stupid her offer must have been. What was she saying? Kazama probably had millions of tastier drinks at his house...er, mansion; why would he drink something at a commoner's place? She laughed and although it reached her eyes, it never reached her heart. "You're right, it can't compare to the tea you have at home." She hadn't said it as an opinion; she said it as a statement. Kazama felt something in his chest as he watched the girl force more laughter out of her rosy lips. It hurt him to see her look sad, but it hurt him even more when she was trying to hide her pain. She was so honest as a child, shedding her tears as soon as she felt like it, but now, she wouldn't shed them even if you threatened her to.

"I'll drink it."

"What?" The statement caught Chizuru off guard. Did she just hear him say that he would drink it?

"You heard me. I said I'll drink itâ€¦ the tea." He looked off to the side, unable to look at the innocent pair of eyes staring at him at the moment. When she didn't move, he sighed. "What? Are you disobeying an order? Hurry up and prepare the tea." She sure was slow.

"Oh! R- right away!" As Chizuru hurried off to the kitchen, which was only a couple of paces away, Kazama made his way to the small table at the centre of the room, sitting down on the floor. He chuckled as she nearly stumbled on her way back to the "living room," although it would be no laughing matter if the tea was to pour on him. "That

reminds me, did you treat your cut yet?"

"My cut?" She tilted her head to the side, wondering what in the world he was talking about. "Oh! Um, no, I didn't." She proceeded with pouring the tea into the cup.

"Why not? Go treat it first. I can pour my own tea." Sure, Kazama was a bossy person, but he knew that injuries were to be treated first above anything.

"No, it's okay."

What? Did she just decline his kind offer?

"It's not 'No, it's okay,' it's 'yes sir.'"

"No, it's really okay."

\_Why, this littleâ€|\_ "Why not?" He asked the girl and when she didn't reply, he lifted her chin up with his long fingers, demanding her to look at him. "\_Why not?"\_ He questioned with more emphasis this time.

Although Chizuru's head was tilted forward to face Kazama, her eyes were trying to focus on something else, preferably on the other side of Kazama. His fingers that were holding her chin gently were warmer than she had expected. She had assumed that his fingers would be cold, just like how his personality, but the warmth on her chin proved her assumptions wrong. That was when his grip on her chin tightened. "Focus. I asked you a question." How had he known that she was spacing out? Oh right, he commented that she often spaced out as a child when they first met too.

"Iâ€|" she started.

"You?" He was growing impatient. How long does it take to get an answer out of her?

"I don't have any band-aids." She continued to look off to the side, but because her face was still facing Kazama, he didn't miss the lovely pink hue on her cheeks.

Kazama stared at her, dumbfounded, and he was rarely dumbfounded, but here he was, dumbfounded. He stared wide-eyed at her and continued to do so before bursting out in laughter. In the process of laughing, he had let go of Chizuru's chin and clutched his stomach for support. Chizuru grunted as she watched the man, laughing as though what she had just said was the funniest thing he has ever heard in his whole life. "Chizuru, you never cease to amuse me," he managed to say through his laughter. She had to admit that he sure had the stamina and endurance to laugh that long.

When it didn't look like he was ready to stop laughing any time soon, Chizuru spoke up. "Umâ€| Kazama-sama?" Suddenly, he stopped. \_So it was that easy all along?\_ Then, he looked up, but instead of the smile that she had expected, he looked rather serious.

"Chizuru."

She gulped nervously. It was the first time she heard him say her name so intently. There were a few times where he was serious, but they were nothing compared to the situation right now.

"Umâ€¦ yes?"

"Call my name again."

"...Kazama-sama?"

He stayed silent, but his firm gaze never left her line of vision. She was the first one to look away uncomfortably. The sudden change in the air around Kazama was torturous and that look in his eyes was unbearable to stare at.

"I see, so you've forgotten after all." His sudden words brought her attention back and she looked at him once more.

"What have I forgotten?" she asked, confused. Her homework? Nope, she brought it with her alright.

"Remember when we first met and you didn't believe that we knew each other?" She nodded silently, urging him to continue. "The reason you don't remember is because you've somehow lost your memories."

"What?" How could that be? She remembered her parents perfectly well! "Stop joking. I remember everything I should remember."

He sighed, as if he was tired from everything that had happened today. "Alright, tell me what you know."

"I remember my parents, every detail about the place I used to live in, all the faces of my maids and servants, the reason I lost everything-"

"How about your brother?"

\_Wait, what? \_"Brother? I don't have a brother." What nonsense was Kazama speaking of now?

"You do, a twin brother. He was sold along with your parents years ago."

The conversation was getting out of hand now. If she had a brother, a twin brother at that, then of course she would remember!

"Stop trying to trick me. It won't wor-"

"Just shut up and listen," he cut her off. Doing what she was told to do, Chizuru quieted down and waited for what he was about to say next. "Yukimura Kaoru. Does that name ring a bell? He was sold along with your parents to the Nagumo family, but that's all I really know." Kazama mentally cursed the person who stopped him from investigating deeper into the case. \_She promised that she would help Chizuru if I stopped looking for her, but look at what she's living in now! \_

"Um, Kazama-sama?" She somehow felt free to call him by that name now. Her gentle voice brought him back from his regrets and he shook

his thoughts off. He reached into his bag and pulled out a small album of what appeared to be old photos. "And this is?" Chizuru inquired. He didn't answer; he only flipped open to a page and turned the album so it was visible to Chizuru. She gasped as she saw the picture. It was a photo of her and someone else. When she looked at the boy standing next to her in the photo, her mind began to register him. "Kaoru?"

Kazama nearly jumped out of his seat on the cold wooden floor when he heard her say her twin brother's name. Did she finally remember him? He was about to ask when she suddenly grasped her head tightly, turning away from the table and the photo album. She groaned in pain as a massive headache began to take control of her senses. "Chizuru, are you alright?" As Kazama watched the girl suffer, his heart began to race in fear. Kazama hasn't felt like this for a long time, and to prove it, the last time he was afraid was when he heard about Chizuru's family. For some reason, all these strange emotions only occur when it comes to Chizuru. "Chizuru?" What could he do to ease her suffering? Just listening to her cries of pain was frightening enough. He tried his best to remain calm; if he were to lose his composure, he wouldn't be able to think straight. First, he has to get her attention and see what the problem is. Her headache was most likely a sign that her memories were returning. However, at that moment, Kazama couldn't tell if the headache was a good or bad thing.

He wrapped his arms around her, attempting to sooth her quivering body. His heart continued to beat wildly as her trembling didn't show signs of stopping. After what felt like an eternity, the shaking finally stopped. "Chizuru?" He tried to get her attention once more before she fell limp in his arms, losing consciousness.

\* \* \*

><p>I wonder who's preventing Kazama from finding out about Chizuru. :) Hope everyone enjoyed this chapter! Thank you for reading!<p>

Time to respond to the anonymous reviews!

Dear \*\*Olivia\*\*: Thank you! And thank you for understanding. :)

Dear \*\*aizawa saki\*\*: Thank you! Haha, I suck at grammar too. In fact, it's because I got such a low mark in English (well, it wasn't that low, but it was pretty darn low to me) that I began to write fanfictions to (hopefully) improve myself. Wow! I look up to people who can draw manga well! Thank you!

## 8. Chapter 7

Hey everyone! I'm so sorry for the late update, but I've been busy helping a friend out with work. I'm trapped in that store for 8 hours a day with no wi-fi and it's pretty hard to write since my mom's there to help too. It's like... razor sharp eyes watching you (Kay, I'm kidding, she wasn't exactly watching me, but I was afraid she'd come up to me and go like "Ohh, what are you typing?") Then, I come home and when I finally get to go on my laptop, I have writer's block. Best situation ever, I know.

Putting all that aside, I'm back! School starts soon and I keep reminding myself to review over some stuff, but everyone knows I'll either put it last minute or completely forget about it! ^^ There's also the thing about my family's dog being in this contest and although I don't expect to win, it'd be nice to get a high rank. That's why I'm constantly trying my best to advertise this wherever I go. So it'd be truly kind of you all to help out!

\*Heisuke appears \*\*a lot\*\* in this chapter, but don't worry, it's still a ChizuruxKazama fic. His part is crucial to the story's development though! :o

\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki. \*\*

\* \* \*

><p>"<em>Chizuru! Chizuru, hurry up!" A boy about the age of six finally stopped running and turned around, his face coming in view. His face was practically identical to her own and if they were to stand side by side, no one would be able to figure out who's who except by their hair. <em>

"\_Coming!" She called out to him, speeding up her pace in an attempt to catch up with the boy. "Geez, Kaoru! Stop running so fast!" Kaoruâ€|that was his name. \_

"\_Sorry, sorry, but mother says we have to be back by sunset, remember? If you want to make your wreath out of the flowers from the field, then we're going to have to hurry up!" He waited patiently for her to catch up and when she did, he grabbed her hand in his, pulling her along to match his pace.\_

"\_Okay!" \_

"\_By the way, who are you making it for?" He asked. \_

"\_Myself." \_

"\_Really? Selfish!" \_

"\_What? Were you expecting it to be for you?" She giggled. He was just way too easy to read. \_

"\_N- no! What are you-"\_

"\_I'll make one for you too!" She grinned at him. He blushed and smiled back, clearly embarrassed.\_

\_"O- oh, then that's okay. I'll forgive-"\_

"\_And I'll make one for Chika-chan too!"\_

"\_Eh?! Chikage too?" His smile dropped immediately after hearing the sound of \_\_\*\*his\*\*\_\_ name. \_

"\_What? Is there something wrong?" She wondered what had gotten into him all of a sudden. \_

"\_No, nothing. I can't forgive you after all."\_



"\_What? Onii-chan, you're so mean!" She stuck her tongue out at her brother, in hopes that he will feel at least a little bit guilty.\_

"\_Chizuru! What did I say about sticking your tongue out at people?!" He warned, threatening to grab her tongue and stuff it back into her mouth, but she had already turned away. To her dismay, she felt him pull her back. \_

"\_Chizuru, let me help you stuff your tongue back in." His eyes were in slits and his voice was menacing, even more menacing than their maids when they were scolding them.\_

"\_No!" She managed to scream (with her tongue still sticking out) before Chizuru was pulled back into consciousness. \_

\* \* \*

><p>Chizuru's eyes snapped open to the awkward feeling of someone staring at her. She turned her head, which for some reason throbbed in pain, and immediately came face to face with none other than Kazama Chikage. His crimson eyes stared down on her pleasant brown ones before his lips parted to speak. "How long do you intend to stick your tongue out like that?" <em>What?<em> "Or are you that desperate to kiss me?"

The fogginess she had from before quickly cleared up as she realized what he was talking about. She quickly stuck her tongue back in her mouth and turned away, a deep red colour rapidly spreading on her already flushed cheeks.

"Don't strain yourself too hard. You have a fever." Upon hearing his words, she finally noticed that she was sweating quite a bit and there was a wet towel folded on her forehead, although it wasn't very cold anymore. She got up, groaning as she felt the inconvenience her fever had brought along. She heard Kazama "tsk" slightly before she felt him push her frail body back onto the bed. "I told you not to strain yourself, didn't I?" She always failed to listen to him. If she was just a random person, then she would already be facing some sort of punishment by now, but she wasn't. She was Chizuru, his childhood friend, so his patience lasted longer with her. However, he has his limits too.

She knew that having a fever was a bad condition to move around in, but she really had to go to school. She couldn't afford, literally, missing out on any lessons. Under the pressure of Kazama's gaze though, she had to submit to lying still for now.

\_Wait a minuteâ€| Kazama?\_ \_Why's he here?\_ She turned to look at him again, but then realized just where she was. Well, she \_didn't\_ know where she was, but that came as a bigger shock. "Where am I?" She blurted out, her voice still groggy from slumber.

"My house." He says house, but he really means mansion, Chizuru joked in her head, but mentally punched herself in the head after. This obviously wasn't the best time for jokes.

"Why?" She demanded. She knew she was going to regret speaking to Kazama in such a way later, but she really wanted the answers now.

"Did you want to go to the hospital instead?" He asked, but when Chizuru gave him a look that told him to cut to the chase, he did. "Your place," he spoke slowly, not knowing how to put the condominium she lives in into words, "didn't seem to be a very good place to rest." So he brought her here. Wow. Now, she really had to get up.

"What time is it?" She tried to sit up, pushing his arms aside as gently as she could. He sighed.

"4 o'clock."

"What?" She spat, turning to face the man straight in the face to make sure he wasn't lying, but knowing Kazama, she probably wouldn't have any luck finding out if he was telling the truth or not, so she searched the room for a clock instead.

"You don't believe me?" he asked, his tone rising in a teasing manner.

"N- no," she stuttered. He got her; she really did think he was lying, but was she wrong in doing that?

He sighed again. "It is; trust me." Hearing the honesty in his tone, she decided to believe him. Well, it's impossible to get a perfect attendance now. "Don't worry. I phoned the school and told them why you were absent."

"I see," she mumbled. \_ Wait a minute, why didn't he just tell them straight on? Could it be he didn't go to school either? \_ Caught in her own thoughts, she jumped when he suddenly spoke again.

"What? Not going to thank me?"

"Oh, th- thank you." She bowed a slight arch and when she raised her head back up, he had a sideways smile placed on his flawless face.

"Are you wondering if I went to school or not?"

She gaped in awe; how did he know? Had he read her mind? \_No, that isn't humanly possible...I don't think. \_

"It's easy; everything shows on your face," he smirked when she gawked at him again.

"Oh...I see," she said when it didn't look like he was going to continue "reading her mind."

"Are you worried about me?" He teased.

"What?" She was about to ask what he had meant by that, when realization suddenly dawned on her. "Wait, I have work!" She rushed out of the bed, or at least she tried to, but stumbled back when she felt her body weaken. An arm stopped her fall and Kazama grabbed her shoulders, forcing her to look straight at him.

"Don't go to work anymore."

"What?" She blinked, still feeling the fever take a heavy toll on her body. "Please stop kidding around."

"I'm not." He shifted his hands lower until they cupped her elbows.  
"Live with me."

\* \* \*

><p><em>"I understand, Chikage. I give you permission," the man on the other line of the phone spoke.<em>

\_"Thank you, father." It was rare of him to speak in such gratitude, but he was truly grateful to his father for accepting his request.\_

\_"By the way, how is Chizuru doing?" His father spoke her name quietly, as if he didn't want the people around him to hear.\_

\_"She's not the same, but I will definitely bring her back."\_

\_"Alright. Treat her well."\_

\_"I will." He will most definitely treat Chizuru well. After all, he finally found her and he's making sure she stays this time.\_

\_"Oh, andâ€¦ Chikage?"\_

\_"Yeah?"\_

\_"Make sure to hide this whole business from-"\_

\_"I know." He said, cutting his father off and ending the phone call with a simple "bye."\_

\* \* \*

><p>As he reviewed his conversation on the phone with his father, he knew that he had made the right choice. He couldn't invite her over to stay at his house without at least one of his parents' permission, so for the past few days, he's been trying desperately to get in touch with his father.<p>

His hands still clutching her elbows, he watched as her legs gave in and she fell back on the bed. He released his grip on her and watched in silent. While his thoughts were running smoothly in his head, her thoughts were running wild in hers.

She was exhausted, physically and mentally. Kazama's offer just now was basically the same as offering her money. She could get her old lifestyle back if she were to accept his offer, but could she? She considered the pros and cons in her head carefully. It would be good, since she wouldn't have to suffer from overworking anymore. Bad thing was she had to say goodbye to the neighbourhood she's raised herself in. While she preferred living in luxury again, she had to remind herself that she would be staying with Kazama Chikage...and what a threat \_that\_ would be. Not to mention the kind of threats that would be coming from his fan girls. She sighed; what was she going to do?

Kazama analyzed Chizuru's current position, slouched on the bed of his guest room. After finding out that she wasn't exactly sick and was just sleeping, he had carried her out of her place and brought her to his house, since as he mentioned before, her place wasn't exactly tolerable (at least to him, it isn't).

When they got home, he stuffed her in the nearest room so he could check up on her right away. Still, carrying her up those stairs was truly troublesome for him. He didn't want anyone else to carry her, but a growing human girl wasn't exactly very light in weight. He had taken the day off school just to watch over her sleeping form, ready to act if she showed any signs of pain. That and he also fell asleep sometime early in the morning.

During the night, she had come up with a fever and he had the maids work vigorously to bring in the right supplies to treat the fever. He had even contacted the family doctor and forced him to rush over. (Of course, the doctor wasn't very pleased, but he was being paid efficiently for doing his job.) After hearing that it was nothing too serious, Kazama had relaxed. Thanks to Chizuru, he hadn't gotten much sleep and was barely awake at the moment. This girl would always somehow manage to get him so worked up.

"Chizuru, live with me." He offered once again, suspecting that she had either forgotten about it or she had fallen asleep with her eyes open.

"No." Kazama's eyes narrowed dangerously.

"Why not?"

"No." She said again, as if she was trying to convince herself. After thinking over everything, the cons overpowered the pros. Sure, being able to live in luxury again was great, but she didn't want to think about all the people who would suspect and hate her for it, namely Kazama's fan girls. Those girls were scary. However, she knew that using such a reason to counter his words would be futile. "I just don't want to." Yupp, that's pretty much the best excuse she can come up with.

He didn't understand. He had everything she could ever want, yet she dared say no to him. He gazed down on her, his eyes trying to search for the real reason she didn't want to live with him. He knew she had deeper thoughts on the topic, but he didn't know what. "Tch, fine." Thinking that she was probably covered in sweat right now, he continued. "If you want to shower, there's a bathroom in here. There's a change of clothes for you in the closet too." He explained vaguely before making his way out of the room, closing it shut in the process.

She sighed; she was finally alone. She looked down and noticed that she was still in her school uniform. He was smart in telling her to shower; she was seriously sweating quite a bit. I really need to get out of these clothes, she thought. She got up and steadied herself before walking towards what she hoped was the bathroom. She nearly sighed when she realized that the door led to a closet, but gasped when she found the extra change of clothes Kazama was talking about. The clothes he had left was much more than she had hoped for. She knew he wouldn't offer her something dirty to wear, but she never

knew that it would be a dress! White in colour, it wasn't too formal, but it wasn't really something you'd wear outside either. If anything, it would be something you'd wear to sleep. She sighed; she had no other choice. Clothes in hand, she headed over to the door next over and opened it, confident that it was the washroom this time.

She removed all her clothes and stepped into the shower, wincing as what met her first was cold water. Slowly, the water warmed up and her body relaxed. Pushing the topic about living with Kazama aside, her mind went back to the nostalgic dream she just had. "Kaoru" she whispered. That name felt so familiar on her lips, as if she's spoken that name over and over again in the past. Her thoughts wandered back to yesterday evening's conversation with Kazama. Although she couldn't remember much, she remembered seeing a photo and hearing the same name. If her dream was actually a fragment of her memories, then Kaoru might really be her brother. She sighed; how could she forget about such an important person? If she had even forgotten about her own twin brother, then it wouldn't be surprising if she had forgotten about something, or someone, else. However, there wasn't enough proof yet. She should keep quiet about this for now. Her thoughts on Kaoru were on the top of her list and she wouldn't think about anything else until she remembered everything about her brother. It would be fine; she just had to take baby steps. She was so focused about Kaoru that without realizing it, she had completely forgotten about the "Chika-chan" from her dreams.

\* \* \*

><p>"How was your shower?" A voice greeted her as soon as she opened the bathroom door. She was wondering who it belonged to, but it could only belong to one person: Kazama. She looked at him from her spot in the doorway. He was lying on the couch in the corner of the room, arms covering his eyes in an attempt to block the light coming from the windows. She was glad that he had his eyes closed since she didn't really want him to see her in the dress just yet. It wasn't really that revealing, but she was never too fond of wearing dresses. Averting her attention away from her own outfit, she realized that Kazama wasn't in his uniform anymore. He had changed into his casual clothes which, oddly enough, looked very good on him. "It was good," she replied plainly, walking over to him. Then, she just stood there, gazing down at him.<p>

"What is it?" He asked. \_He doesn't sound mad. That's good\_, Chizuru thought. She was afraid that he would be angry since she had declined his offer, but by the sound of his voice, he seems to be fine.

"Nothing." Just then, water from her still-wet-hair dripped down on to his arm, causing him to flinch. He put his arms to the side and looked up at her, for the first time noticing that she hadn't dried her hair properly.

"Chizuru, what's the meaning of this?" He asked, wiping off the water from his arm. For a second there, he thought she was crying, but was relieved when it was only from her hair.

"What's the meaning of what?" She asked, momentarily forgetting about the embarrassing dress and tilting her head a bit. To his dismay, that slight movement caused more water to fling out from her

hair.

"Why's your hair still wet?" He propped his upper body up with an elbow and his legs slid off the couch.

"Oh, I couldn't find the blow dryer."

He sighed and got up. "Seriously, what am I supposed to do with you?" He mumbled, making his way towards the bathroom. "Stay there," he ordered when he heard her stir behind him.

When he came back out, he was holding a comb in one hand, a blow dryer in the other, and a towel was resting on his shoulder. "Sit," he demanded, pointing with the comb to the floor. She did as she was told and waited. She knew what he was going to do, but felt hesitant since he was Kazama. At the same time, (since he was Kazama) she couldn't just decline. The living with him thing is a completely different story though.

He nodded satisfyingly when he saw the eyes of a puppy on her face that was waiting for his next order. He plugged the wire of the blow dryer into the closest outlet and extended it. Then, he picked up the hoodie that was lying on the couch and held it to her. "Wear this."

Chizuru did as she was told. The hoodie was quite warm and felt soft against her arms, but it was also quite big. She assumed that it belonged to Kazama. He must have realized that the dress by itself wasn't exactly something I should wear when I'm sick, Chizuru reasoned, but then why would he lend me the dress in the first place? Then again, why did Kazama have women's clothing? The questions swirled around and around in her head and were waiting to be answered, but she couldn't find the courage to ask under Kazama's observant eyes.

Kazama watched her the whole time, smirking when he found the image of Chizuru wearing his clothes pleasing to the eye. He then sat on the couch, immediately getting to work with her hair. The whole time, she didn't say a word and just let him dry and comb her hair. It felt quite soothing having this done to her, but she was on alert just in case he decided to pull out a pair of scissors and cut off her hair for whatever reasons he may have.

"Your hair is awfully damaged." The sudden whisper-like voice filled her ears and she felt herself melting as he continued to caress her hair, massaging her head as he did so. He had finished drying and combing her hair a while ago and now, he was just playing around with it. Although reluctant to say so, she was really enjoying this, but then his words finally sunk in. "I know," she replied shamefully. He stayed quiet, but he didn't remove his hands from her hair.

"If you live here, I will offer better hair products for you to use," he muttered, but it just sounded like a bunch of mumbling to her ears.

"Hm? What was that?" She asked, turning around slightly, but when he didn't say anything, she decided it was just her imagination and turned back.

"Kazama-sama," she suddenly spoke, wondering if she should continue

or not. When he stayed quiet, she had the sudden urge to spit out what was on her mind. "Your hair looks really soft." She felt his hands stop and she turned her head around to steal a look at him. His eyes were wide with shock and when she was about to ask what was so surprising, he regained his composure and chuckled.

"What's so funny?"

"You used to say that quite often," he commented, reminiscing in his memories. "You used to rush over to me and the first thing you'd do is go for my hair." Remembering the sweet moments between the two caused him to wonder. Where did the Chizuru that he knew so well go? The Chizuru that didn't bother with formalities when they were together, the Chizuru that called him "Chika-chan," the Chizuru that he loved so dearly, where had she gone?

When she first called him "Chika-chan," he thought it was adorable, but it was indeed an embarrassing nickname for one such as him. They had made a promise to only use that nickname when they were alone and of course, she went and told her brother about it. \_"If it's onii-chan, then it's fine, right?" \_She used to say. \_That littleâ€|\_ Kazama's eyebrows furrowed as Chizuru's brother came into his mind. Kaoru was always in the way of their fun. Whenever he wanted to go and play alone with Chizuru, Kaoru would always tag along with them. Of course, he didn't say anything about it; still, he couldn't help but resent Kaoru for it.

Putting his hatred and memories aside, he lowered his head so Chizuru can reach his hair. "You want to touch it, don't you?" He voiced alluringly. The question and his tone of voice caught Chizuru off guard and she hesitated. However, with his hair in reach and practically begging to be touched, she felt a sudden urge to raise her hand and start patting his head.

Slowly, her hand rose until it leveled with the top of his head. She dropped it unsteadily on his head and began caressing the smooth locks. As she combed her hand through his hair, she took in every bit of detail. The feeling of his hair in her grasps felt nostalgic, as if she's done this to someone before, but she's never been close to guys. Well, not until entering high school that is. So, just where has she felt this quality of hair before?

Kazama's eyes were closed and he showed no signs of resisting, so she continued fingering through his hair until someone knocked briefly at the door.

"Young master, we have brought some food for the little lady," a gentle, yet respective, voice said.

"Yes, bring it in." He said without lifting his head. When the man came in, he found himself dumbstruck by the scene in front of him. The servant, Chizuru supposed, was eying the two suspiciously even after she had returned her hand to her lap. She blushed a deep scarlet, to Kazama's amusement, and turned away from the two men.

"I will take my leave now." He said as soon as he was done setting out the plates of food. Kazama nodded slightly before returning his full attention to Chizuru. "Chizu-"

"CHIZURU!" The sudden and loud call of her name came from the hallway

and both of them turned to see who it was. She nearly laughed out loud when the owner of the voice rushed past the room they were in, unbeknownst that she was in there. "I'm right here!" She called out. She didn't know why she did that, but she felt like she knew that voice. It sounded exactly like... Heisuke.

"Chizuru!" The boy yelled as soon as he ran into their room. He was breathing awfully fast and he looked as though he had just ran a marathon.

"You don't have to yell; I'm right here," she explained calmly, proud of herself at the fact that she had guessed correctly. "Kazama-sama, why is Heisuke-kun here?"

"Yes, why is he here? I would like to know that too," he smiled threateningly and stood up, aiming his glare at the servants who had caught up to Heisuke.

"Sorry, we thought he was your friend, young master." One servant uttered out in complete exhaustion. Trailing that boy was no easy task; that's for sure.

"That boy is no friend of mine. Take him away immediately," he ordered strictly. The servants nodded their heads vigorously, preparing to take Heisuke by the arms before Chizuru stopped them.

"Wait! I want to know why he's here first!" She spoke out as loud as she could, standing up in the process.

"Chi- chizuru?! What are you wearing?" Heisuke immediately flushed a dark colour at the adorable sight in front of him. Although she was wearing a hoodie, she hadn't zipped it up all the way, revealing the lovely dress she was wearing under. His eyes wandered towards her chest, but was both relieved and disappointed to see that the dress wasn't as revealing as he thought it to be. Unable to avert his eyes away though, he continued staring at her. Kazama, however, was not very pleased with the sight in front of him.

"Explain why you're here so we can throw you out," Kazama spoke out of annoyance.

"I don't have to explain now, do I?" As if to add more fuel to the fire, Heisuke shot back at Kazama just as furiously.

"Heisuke-kun, I don't think you're helping here," Chizuru stated her opinion. "Now, tell me why you're here."

"Oh, okay. Since Chizuru asked so nicely, I'll tell you."

\* \* \*

><p><strong>"<em>The student council assembly will not take place today. I repeatâ€¦!" <em>\*\*

"Were we even supposed to have an assembly in the first place?"\_

"I agree. This school is just weird."\_



"\_I believe it is the student council that is weird."

\_

"Y\_amazaki-kun, Chizuru-chan's also in the council. If you dare say she's weird again, I'll kill you." \_

\*\*"â€|\_due to the fact that the president is away." \_\*\*

"\_The president's away? It's only the fourth day of school..."\_

\_"Yeah...Should I kill him?"\_

"\_Souji! If you say that in front of Chizuru, you'll be the one killed." \_

"\_I know, I know. I've been very careful around her. Now, call me Souji-senpai already."\_

"\_No!" \_

"\_Hold on."\_

"\_What is it, Saitou?" \_

"\_Both the president and Yukimura are away at the same time."\_

"\_So? People can get sick at the same time. They probably ate the same thing since they ate lunch together yesterday." \_

"\_Heisuke, you don't understand. Didn't she seem fine when you had class with her after?"\_

"\_Yeahâ€|stomach aches come within time. Yamazaki, are you on Saitou's side now too?" \_

"\_No, I'm not on anyone's side and the stomach ache isn't important. Isn't it just...suspicious?"\_

\_"â€|"\_"

\_"\_â€|\_"\_

\_"OHHHHH IT IS!"\_

\_"Yes, it is."\_

"â€|\_THEN CHIZURU'S IN TROUBLE!"\_

"\_Heisuke, what are you doing?"\_

"\_I'M GOING TO LOOK FOR CHIZURU!"\_

"\_You can't do that now. School isn't over yet and you don't even know where she lives, idiot." \_

"\_Oh, right. Shut up, Souji! I knew that!"\_

"\_It's Souji-senpai."

><em>

><em>"Yeah, yeah. Whatever."<em>

\_"If you're planning to go to Yukimura-san's house, then I'm sure you can get her address from your homeroom teacher."\_

\_"From Harada-sensei?"\_

\_"He is your homeroom teacher, correct?"\_

\_"Yeah, kay, thanks Yamazaki!"\_

"\_And if worse comes to worst, you know where the president lives."\_

\* \* \*

><p>"And so, right after school, I rushed over to your house. The door was unlocked which was really weird, unless you're just a scatterbrain which, by the way, you don't seem like one, so I knew right away that you were with the president. And then after convincing my driver to give me one more ride, I ended up here!" He explained, stuffing another piece of food in his mouth. Chizuru watched as her meal was slowly devoured by her friend and sighed. She hadn't eaten anything since last night and she was getting pretty darn hungry at the moment... Would it be rude to request for another plate later?<p>

"Umâ€| Heisukeâ€|kun?" Chizuru was unsure if she should speak up or not, but made up her mind anyway. "I asked you why you're here, not how you got here, but thanks for the extra information." It was very useful information as well. She had no idea that she had left her door unlocked, though she was unconscious at the time so that gave her an excuse.

"Can he leave now?" Kazama asked, directing his question to Chizuru. Technically, he didn't need permission to kick him out, but he knew she would hate him for it afterwards if he didn't get her consent first. Besides, he was eating up all of Chizuru's food (not that it was a problem, he could just get more food after.)

"No, he came all the way here! Wouldn't it be plain rude to just make him leave like this?" She didn't exactly have a say in things, but she hoped to change his attitude towards poor Heisuke even if it was just a little.

"Chizuru, why are you here?" Heisuke inquired, using Kazama's silence as a chance.

"I fainted and Kazama-sama brought me here." Chizuru answered simply after a moment of thought, leaving out the details on purpose. Heisuke was her friend, but there were "certain things" he should not know, and since she wasn't sure what those "certain things" were, she decided to leave things as simple as possible for now.

"Why did you faint?" His tone raised noticeably in concern.

"Oh, Iâ€|" She regretted telling him that she fainted. What was she doing, making Heisuke worry like that? She looked up at him, noticing that he was expecting an answer, so she searched her memories for one. Her mind went back to the previous night. She remembered seeing

the picture of her and Kaoru and the impact it had on her mind had been unbearable. Before she knew it, she had fainted, but she couldn't tell Heisuke that, could she? "I just overworked myself, that's all." Hopefully, that was believable enough.

"Oh, I see." Heisuke replied. "Well, Chizuru! You should take better of yourself! The whole gang was really worried about you, you know!" He lectured her, being careful with his choice of words. He didn't want to frustrate the already weakened girl.

"Ohâ€|" They were all worried about her. "Thanks for telling me." She smiled brightly, or as bright as she could make it in her current condition.

"It's fine. It's no big deal." Heisuke scratched the back of his head, hiding his joy. He was glad to be of help to her, if what he just did was considered help anyway, but all that mattered was the fact that she had thanked him. It felt nice being thanked by Chizuru.

"You came all the way here just to say that and you still call it no big deal," Kazama voiced from beside her, clearly annoyed by his lack of presence to the two. "It's quite a big deal actually. I can report you to the police for trespassing."

"I didn't trespass! Your people let me in!" Heisuke countered with a huff of irritation.

"They let you in without my consent. Now, leave." Without another look towards the boy, he grabbed Chizuru's arm and led her back to the couch. He sat her down on the floor again before continuing to play with her hair, combing through her brown locks with his long pale fingers. Before Heisuke could complain, he was thrown outside by the servants.

\* \* \*

><p>"Kazama-sama, I don't think that was very nice of you." She was seated in between his legs again and her hair was still in his possession. She was pouting and if it wasn't for his free hand holding her head in place, she would have turned around to glare at him. She was still scared, but that didn't mean she didn't have the courage to act and speak up for herself.<p>

"It's wrong to trespass into someone's house."

"Mansionâ€|" She mumbled, correcting his mistake.

"Doesn't matter." The two remained silent for a while before Chizuru suddenly felt something warm against her ear. She didn't have to turn around to know that Kazama was leaning towards her. His face was only a mere inch or so away from her ear and she could hear him inhale and exhale. Each time he did so, she felt the warm sensation of his breath brushing against her skin. She shivered as he spoke in his velvety voice. "Chizuru, I don't like it when you stand up for other men, especially when you have to go against me." Distracted by the warm air caressing her skin and the deep voice ringing through her ears, she didn't understand his words at first. However, they left a deep impression on her as they finally sunk in.

"Wha-" She started to complain, but she was cut off by his hand against her mouth.

"Shh." The soft sound stirred butterflies in her stomach and she whimpered, not at all pleased by his hold on her mouth. "You deserve some punishment," he whispered teasingly. This time, she didn't make a sound. She decided to listen attentively, afraid of what he meant by "punishment."

He chuckled. "Good girl," he voiced softly, causing a shiver to run down her spine once more. She tensed up and assumed that he must have felt it, because he let out a gentle laugh not long after. That laugh alone could have caused her heart to leap out of her chest. By now, her ears were beat red and it was getting more and more embarrassing for her by the second. If he didn't let go anytime soon, she was afraid that she would suffocate from the lack of air. She felt the warmth emitting from him linger on for a while longer before it left her. Once again, she heard the sound of gentle chuckling.

\* \* \*

><p>"Hey, this isn't fair. Don't I get some credit for coming all the way out here?" Heisuke kicked a rock on the ground from outside the front gate. <em>What did I even come here for again? <em>He wondered as he continued to abuse the poor rock with his foot. \_Oh right, I had to check if Chizuru was alright or not.\_ He had completed his task, he assumed, since she seemed normal enough, but was leaving her there a good idea after all? Even if he wanted to take her away, where would he take her? From what he's seen before, her place wasn't veryâ€¦ comfortable, and his place wasn't as exquisite as Kazama's, although it was a thousand times better than her place.

Realizing that Chizuru's been living in such a terrible situation, he felt somewhat sorry for the girl. It didn't take an idiot to figure out that she wasn't the richest person around and he wasn't able to fathom just how she had managed to support herself. In order to attend a school such as Kazama High, one must have money and power. Chizuru didn't exactly have any of those things anymore, so she must have solely depended on her studies to get her in. "Chizuru," he spoke out unconsciously as he rolled the stone around with his foot. Just then, a familiar tune started playing from his back pocket. He reached for his cell phone and flipped it open, not even bothering to check the caller ID before placing it right to his ear. "I'm done. You can bring the car around now." Based on his past experiences, he assumed that it was his chauffeur.

"I can't drive," the voice on the other line spoke flatly.

"What? Oh, hey, Saitou, what's up?" Realizing that it was his friend right away, he used a more friendly tone. It wasn't that he was cold towards his family's assistants, but at the same time, it was kind of hard to talk like they were friends. Besides, it was rare that Saitou would call him, so of course, he had to display a good attitude.

"How's it going with her?"

"Huh?"

"You know who I'm talking about." Saitou sounded awfully annoyed,

although that seemed to be his default tone.

"Oh! You mean Chizuru? Yeah, she's fine." Heisuke thought for a moment. "I guess," he added.

"You guess? What do you-"

"Hey, Heisuke-kun~ It's your senpai here." Saitou's cold voice was replaced by a nonchalant one.

"What do you want, Souji?" Heisuke didn't have time to play around with him. He just wanted to get this phone call over with so he could call his chauffeur and go home. He seriously had a lot of thinking to doâ€|aloneâ€|in his roomâ€|far from the rest of civilization, or as far as he can get since he lived in the city.

"How cold. I told you to call me senpai, but I guess this isn't the best time for it." \_No, you don't say, \_Heisuke thought sarcastically before urging his friend to continue.

"So, what do you-"

"How is she?"

"What?" All of these questions seemed to have caught him off guard.

"I'm talking about Chizuru-chan."

"Oh, yeah, she seems fine," he told the curious male.

"Okay, I'll trust you," Okita started, "but if she doesn't come back to school safe and sound, I'll kill you." There was the signature threat Okita constantly threw out.

"Like I said, you should really stop-"

"Chizuru isn't here right now, is she?" He mused. Heisuke groaned; he was so tired of listening to Okita's excuses.

\* \* \*

><p>Heisuke sighed; he was finally home. Their call had lasted longer than expected and since he wanted to be a good friend, he didn't have the confidence to hang up on them. To his dismay though, the other party didn't have any plans on hanging up so soon either. He eventually decided to just find the car himself while staying on the phone with the guys. The whole way home and even during the walk into the mansion, he had his phone pressed against his ear.<p>

He sighed again, rubbing his ear in an attempt to ease the weird feeling of having someone speak in your ear for too long. Now that he was finally alone in his room, he made his way towards the corner and stared at it. This is what he would do whenever he was determined to get to the bottom of something. He glared at the wall intently as questions circled around in his head. What was Chizuru to him? What was he to her? He asked himself for a good five seconds before the door to his room slammed open. His mother was in the doorway, holding a big photo album in one hand and the door knob in the other.

"Heisuke! Let's reminisce for a bit, what do you say?" The woman spoke in her cheery voice.

"What? No, mom!" Of all the times she wanted to do boring old family stuff, she had to choose now. "Can we do that another day?" He added as soon as he saw his mother's solemn and sulky expression.

"I just want to spend some quality time with you, son. You know how busy I am these days."

\_If you're so busy, then why are you here right now? \_"Eh? Right now's kind of-"

"I'm cutting your weekly allowance by a hundred dollars." He thought about it for a moment.

"Two hundred dollars." A couple hundred dollars wasn't much...

"Three hundred dollars." ...but if this was to continue forever, it would seriously affect the total amount altogether.

"Four-"

"ALRIGHT ALREADY!" He gave in. His mother snickered and walked further into his son's room, sitting on the bed.

"Now, let's start when you were still a baby..."

\* \* \*

><p>"And this is you at Kazama Chikage's birthday party when you were five."<p>

"Yeah, yeah." The sound of his name seemed to infuriate him even more. He was already frustrated enough when he was forced to sit and look at photos, but this was just pure torture.

"This is you with all the guests at the party. Wow, this is quite a bit. That's the heir of the Kazama family for you."

"Yeah, yeah." When he was a child, he was forced to attend a lot of strange events. Most of them were hosted by higher ups such as the Kazama family. It wasn't your average birthday party; it was more of a business meeting, but with kids and adults altogether. He shuddered at the amount of parties he has attended in the past. It could have been a triple digit number. Who knows? He's attended too many to count.

"Ah! And this is you taking a picture with Kazama Chikage and his original fiancée, Yukimura Chizuru-sama."

"Yeah, ye- WAIT, WHAT?" He suddenly exclaimed, grabbing the photo album roughly from his mother.

"Yes, Yukimura Chizuru was her name. You remember about the Yukimura incident, right?" He nodded his head attentively and his mother continued. "You were still a child back then so I wouldn't be

surprised if you don't remember much, but Chizuru-sama was still a child too. Such a shame. If only her family still had the money today, she would be able to marry into the Kazama family, and what a splendid sight that would be!" His mother clapped her hands together as if she was seeing the wedding scene right in front of her.

"Chizuru's that guy's fiancée?" Heisuke wondered out loud.

"She used to be, but now it's someone else. Hm... I can't seem to recall who at the moment, but his current fiancée comes from a family one rank lower than the Yukimura family. However, since the Yukimura family has fallen, there was no other choice," she explained sadly. Judging by his mother's expression, she must have really wanted Chizuru and... that guy... to end up together.

"Mom, do you really like the Yukimura family or something?" He inquired curiously. She smiled warmly at her son and nodded her head cheerfully as though she was a high school girl in love.

"The Yukimura family is full of bright and cheerful people. They're really kind and generous, so it was so hard to bear when I heard about what had happened. Our family had tried to help, but it wasn't enough."

"Didn't anyone else help?" His voice grew louder as he spoke. He was angry. If Chizuru's family was so great, then why didn't more people help at the time? His mother's expression changed from a sad one to a serious one.

"It's awfully suspicious, but at the time, many families that were associated with the Yukimura family had financial problems, including our family. Luckily, we were able to get through with it, but the Yukimura family wasn't as fortunate."

Heisuke stayed quiet and went over what his mother had just explained. It was a lot to take in and his anger was still boiling in his blood, but he didn't have anything else to say.

\* \* \*

><p>The door closed and the loud footsteps caused by his mother's high heels grew quieter and quieter until he could no longer hear it. He was still seated on his bed and he hadn't moved from his position earlier. He didn't know what to think. To know that Chizuru had been through so much pain was saddening and to know that she was originally Kazama's fiancée caused jealousy to stir. Maybe that was the reason Kazama was so obsessed with her. Perhaps he wants to take her back.<p>

Heisuke sighed in exasperation; he still hadn't understood his own feelings, but he knows that Chizuru isn't an object. She wasn't anyone's possession. She wouldn't want to belong to anyone, let alone the demon president of their school. Still, in her current situation, she was barely meeting the necessities of living. She needed support and he hated to admit it but Kazama was better than him at that.

He lied down on his bed, satisfied that it was finally quiet. He could finally get through with some thinking. He wanted to take the whole evening and plan out what he was going to do from now on.

Should he help Chizuru? Of course, he should, but how will he? He needed to think of what was best for her, but just what should he do? Then, the door slammed open for the second time since he got home.

"Heisuke-sama! Your tutor has arrived!"

God, why didn't anyone knock in this place?

\* \* \*

><p>Okay! How was it? I'm truly sorry about the long wait. It was a horrible week. D; Anyway, thanks for reading and please review! I look forward to reading them!<p>

Dear **\*\*aizawa saki\*\***: Wow, since you were a toddler? When I was toddler, all I did was... -- It's disappointing, never mind. LOL Thank you so much to you and your friend! I really appreciate it! ^^ Thanks for reviewing!

Dear **\*\*vivian101\*\***: Thank you! I'm so glad you liked it! :) Thanks for reviewing!

Dear **\*\*Olivia\*\***: LOOL And yes, Kaoru and Chizuru's parents were sold as in "Okay, you will come with me and I will forget about the debt you owe us." This happens a lot in manga, so I thought it might be suitable here, but I'm pretty sure it's not common in the real world. :) I will explain more as I continue writing though. Haha! Yes, he is an idiot, isn't he? Well, he was mad, so I don't blame him for his rude comment. Thank you for reviewing!

Dear **\*\*Mai\*\***: Thank you! I'm relieved that you think so. I was afraid that he would be OOC. :D Thanks for reviewing!

Dear **\*\*Stalianha\*\***: Thanks! Haha, I bet you were disappointed when you saw how much Heisuke appears in this chapter. xD I'm really sorry, but I had to! I need Heisuke's help in order to finish this fanfiction! . LOOL Mmm, yes, Shizuka. I designed her to be hated LOL I'm glad she's doing her part. She's not really going to be her best friend (like Risa was, if you remember, and yes, Risa will come back in the story from time to time), but she will be a part of the story. Hehe, yes, she likes Kazama, but Kazama only has eyes for Chizuru! MUAHAHAHAH... Kay. I've let you down this time :( I updated so late... D; And it's fine! Don't worry about it! And yes, I understand what you mean perfectly. Thanks for answering my question. ^^ And lastly, thanks for reviewing!

## 9. Chapter 8

Hey guys!\*\* Really sorry\*\* for the late update! School has started once again, so I'm beginning to feel lazy. (Yes, because when there is homework, there is fatigue, and where there is fatigue, there is laziness.) Chapters from now on will be much **\*\*shorter\*\*** than before. This way, I can update faster. It doesn't really affect the story much though, because you basically get 1 chapter's worth in maybe 3-5 chapters now.

**\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki. \*\***



**\*\*Reminder: My poll is still up.\*\***

**\*No F4 in this chapter.**

**\* \* \***

><p>If Kazama had stayed in the room any longer, Chizuru was afraid that she would have quietly leapt out of there herself. Sitting in the same room as Kazama for too long was, in lack of a better word, awkward, especially when the guy is silent and he's not teasing you every thirty seconds. He had left the room shortly after Heisuke left and to her pleasure, he had requested another plate of food for her before he left.<p>

**\* \* \***

><p>"I'm going now," Kazama stood up, pushing Chizuru gently on the back as an indication to move so he could get up.<p>

"Oh, okay." Her response was spoken rather indifferently and her tone didn't show any signs of opinion whatsoever.

It's not like she really enjoyed having him near her, but it's not like she hated his presence either. The whole idea was quite perplexing, but overall, she didn't mind having him here.

She's gotten used to his threatening attitude by now anyway.

"You still have a fever, so you should stay here for a while longer," he called out from his position across the room. He was putting the comb and blow dryer back to their original places (and making awfully loud noises in the process). \_Well, someone's clumsy with their equipment\_, Chizuru commented in her mind. The thought was strange to her though, because Kazama seemed to be the type that excelled at everything, not the type that would fumble with simple everyday equipment. She didn't touch on this topic any deeper though, since he was probably expecting an answer from her.

"No, thank you," she replied as he stepped out of the bathroom. It's getting late soon and she hated the idea of owing Kazama any more than this. Well, she hated being in dept for a number of reasons. One, it gave her bad memories of her past. And two, she just didn't like the feeling of being in dept to someone.

Making it up to them was always the hardest part.

"I should really go home." She got up, signaling that it was about time for her to leave.

"And how do you intend to do that?" He raised a perfect brow, challenging the girl and her resolve.

"What do you mean?" She furrowed her eyebrows in confusion. What was so hard about leaving a building? She just had to open the door, step through the doorway, and continue walking, right?

"Do you even know where you are?"

She thought for a moment. She knew that she was in his house (mansion) right now, but no, she didn't exactly know the address. She

could ask the people nearby for directions, but she doubts there would be someone she could trust. She sighed as she realized that he was rightâ€|as always.

"You have a point there."

"Right?" He smirked in satisfaction as though his little victory just now was something worth mentioning. "I'll give you a ride home. Besides, if I let you walk home and you faint on the way, it would look bad on my part."

He says that now, but if it's him, he will be able to deal with it somehow, Chizuru thought. Kazama had so much power and money; she honestly doubts people would regard him as someone bad. Well, in a way, he was a good guy.

As much as she wanted to refuse his offer though, he was right in some way or another. It would be quite risky walking home in such a condition. She was in a better state than before, but it was still dangerous. She didn't really want to take any chances. Taking up his offers once in a while wouldn't hurt, would it?

Then, she nodded. "Thanks," she said, "for everything."

\* \* \*

><p>He said that the car was ready and that she should take her time. She didn't know whether she should trust him and actually take her time or quickly finish eating the fresh plate of food that was newly set out though. If what he said about the car was true, then isn't the chauffeur basically waiting for her to finish? She didn't want to leave the poor guy waiting!<p>

She didn't have a choice though as she placed the first piece of food she saw in her mouth. Biting into the freshly cooked meat, she felt her taste buds respond in glee as the sauce and the meat merged into one inside her mouth. Since she was eating like a carnivore devouring its prey, it didn't take long for her to finish her meal.

As soon as the plate was empty (and by empty, I mean that there was absolutely nothing left on the plate, not even the sauce), she changed out of the white dress and slid on her uniform. The clothes were all wrinkled since she slept in them, but she didn't have school tomorrow, so it didn't matter. She folded the dress and placed it neatly on the pillow before she made the bed into what she hoped was the original form of it. When she was positive that the room was as clean as could be, she headed out of the room. She began to walk down the hallway when she spotted something at the corner of her eye. Turning her head, she realized that it was actually a person.

Startled, a yelp escaped from her mouth. She had to be honest; she didn't expect anyone to be waiting for her outside. It wasn't as though Kazama didn't trust her, so there was no reason to have 24-hour surveillance on her.

The man standing beside the door she had just come out of had his head bowing deeply, facing the floor. His face was angled so low that she couldn't make out the man's appearance. She waited for him to lift his head, but when he didn't, she spoke up.

"U-um..." she started hesitantly. Suddenly, his head snapped up and realization dawned on her. The man was Shiranui! Of course! He was one of the student council members! That long dark blue hair was far too unique for her to have forgotten about, but somehow, she did just that.

"Seriously, what took you so long? Does a girl really need that much time to prepare? I even fell asleep standing up waiting for you," he complained in that raspy voice of his. \_For someone that just woke up, he sure talks a lot,\_ Chizuru thought\_. She noticed that he slurred a lot and she wondered if he normally talked like that. It was certainly weird, but it was an interesting trait to have, though it can get annoying at times for the listener.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I was just tidying up the room," Chizuru replied.

"Huh? Tidying it up? What are you, a maid? Leave that to the paid workers!" He argued back.

"I just thought that cleaning up after my mess was the least I could do to pay Kazama-sama back." Chizuru didn't back down. She didn't do anything wrong. It was true that she could have left it to the maids and she was sure that they were going to clean up the room after anyway, but it's a custom to leave the room in the best condition she could manage, right?

"The guy isn't into the usual stuff, so paying him back by cleaning a room won't do you any good. Oh, and he isn't interested in money either. Not like you have any though, right?"

Chizuru groaned in annoyance. Was he trying to make a point out of something or was he just plain mocking her? Shiranui pushed off the wall that he was previously leaning on and started walking, motioning for her to follow. "Well, if you want to pay Kazama back, you have to be creative, you know?" A smirk played on his thin lips. "You could, for instance, pay with your body."

Her face flushed a dark shade as soon as her mind registered his words. She shook her head furiously. "Hey, why are you getting all red for? What kind of dirty thoughts were you thinking of? Hmm?" His smirk was noticeably more visible now as he leaned in closer to her. His voice lowered into a whisper as he spoke in her ear. "Do you want to pay him back with your body?"

"No!" She pushed him away and immediately covered her cheeks with her hands. She could feel the heat radiating from her face to her sweaty palms. The embarrassment disappeared as soon as she heard Shiranui's rough laughter from beside her.

"Your reactions are too funny! I meant that you should work as a maid. You know, physical labour? Seriously!" He continued laughing while spouting some nonsense that she couldn't make out. She turned her back towards the man who was still roaring in laughter and voiced a slight "hmp" before walking away.

Noticing that she was leaving him behind, Shiranui stopped laughing and took quick strides to catch up to her. "Hey, you're pretty interesting, you know that?" In his playful tone, she could hear what

she thought was sarcasm.

"Is making fun of me just something to pass your time?" She didn't spare him a glance but instead continued to walk down the hall.

"What?" She heard him say.

"I said-

"No, I heard what you said. Don't tell me you think I'm just joking around?"

"Um, yes? Any normal person would think that way."

"I meant what I said. You are interesting."

Chizuru finally stopped walking and looked up. His usual smug smirk was replaced with irritation tugging on his eyebrows. Looking at him like this, she thought she could really believe what he was saying. Then again, she was dealing with Shiranui here. She didn't know him well, but based on what people have been telling her and the way he acts, she could tell that he didn't always bring good news.

Ignoring his previous comment, she quickly turned away and spoke in a small voice. "Show me the way out. Please."

\* \* \*

><p>"I'm really sorry for my absence today," Chizuru bowed apologetically to her manager. She kept her head low even after the manager had dismissed her. Her manager wasn't angry; in fact, he was glad that she had taken a day off. "You've been working too hard lately. It's not your fault," he had said. <em>Well, at least he wasn't mad. <em>

Chizuru was currently lying flat on her stomach on the cold, hard floor of her room, studying. She didn't get much done though, since her head was filled with thoughts of everything that had happened so far. He had asked her to live with him—\_He\_, of all people, had asked her to live with him. There had to be a catch. Sure, she knew that Kazama could be nice (once in a while), but he couldn't have been that nice!

Naturally, she would reject him. It was just too crazy of an idea. What would all his fans say? What would his parents say? "Don't you dare bring a commoner into the house!" Wasn't that what all rich parents said to their kids?

Kazama's parents wouldn't be an exception.

It was just so much easier living in this old dump. She's gotten used to it after all these years, so why change now? She would be able to make a living by herself. After graduating in the top 10 in her school, she would get a scholarship to attend a nice university and hopefully make good use of her intelligence and skills to find a well paying job. Well, that's her plan.

At least for now, she couldn't think about anything else but studying.

\* \* \*

><p>"Why are you back so soon?" Kazama's piercing voice and eyes shot at the trembling chauffeur.<p>

"I- I've already brought Yu- Yukimura-sama to her de- destination, sir," the man, who was in his mid 50's, felt intimidated under the sharp eyes of the young master.

"Her house is rather far from here. You haven't been speeding, have you?"

"No, sir," the man shook his head in fear.

"Then explain."

"We- well," the man began. "I- I dropped off Yukimura-sama at her wor- workplace."

"You did \_what\_?" The young master's tone was nowhere near kind. "And just who gave you that order?"

"It was Yukimura-sama herself, sir," the man replied weakly. No response came from Kazama and for a second, the man thought he was too angry for words. When he looked up at him though, he was surprised by the expression on his face. With that smirk, he looked as though he was rather amused.

"Well played, Chizuru, well played," the man heard Kazama say.

"Excuse me, sir?"

Kazama returned his distant gaze back to the man in front of him and smirked once more. Completely ignoring the man's confusion, he continued on. "That girlâ€|" Kazama had strictly told her to go home (well, he hadn't exactly ordered her to go home, but he had hinted it pretty well), yet she still ran off to her workplace. That girl was just too serious for her own good. "What am I going to do with you?" he whispered to nobody in particular.

"Are you going to fire me, sir?" The man asked quickly, mistaking Kazama's words as words directed at him when in fact, they were for Chizuru. The man's words finally reached Kazama's ears. "Hmm, that isn't a bad idea actually," he mused.

"What?!"

The cries of a man, who was desperate in keeping his job, rang throughout the mansion that evening.

\* \* \*

><p>Since there was a huge gap from when I wrote the last chapter and when I started this chapter, I might have missed some points. I did review my old chapters to help refresh my memories, but I'm afraid I might have missed some parts. Nonetheless, I hope you enjoyed this chapter. I love reviews so feel free to <strong>review<strong>!  
Positive or negative, I would still love to read them!

I would like to say a big \*\*thank you\*\* to all those who are still following this story! You have no idea how happy it makes me. I know I'm really slow at updating, but I'm so glad you guys are there to support me. If not, I would have given up writing this ages ago. So, thank you so much!

I'm sorry if I missed any reviews:

Dear\*\* chizamaxo\*\*: Thank you so much! I'm so glad you thought so!

Dear \*\*tori-chan\*\*: Thank you so much for the wonderful tip! Since I'm still a newbie at writing fanfictions, I don't have much experience, so receiving helpful tips always help! I often don't know how it feels to be on the reader's side; that's why I find making cliffhangers hard, but I will definitely try my best! Thanks a bunch!

Dear \*\*Stalianha\*\*: Well, there was absolutely no Heisuke in this chapter! He didn't appear at all! LOL Your predictions are so accurate! That just means I have to make things more unpredictable now, don't I? :) LOOOL Oh, it's totally alright! I don't mind at all! ^^ Thank you so much!

Dear \*\*Guest\*\*: I'm so glad you thought so! Haha, Heisuke, the ever overreacting kid. Believe me, I'm really jealous too. :) Tomatoes? Ooo, I love tomatoes. I don't really mind if you throw them at me. LOOL I'm joking. It would get a tad bit too messy. Thank you for reviewing!

Dear\*\* BriarRose\*\*: I will definitely put more fluffiness as the story goes on! This chapter didn't have much romance at all. Too bad, huh? :( Sorry! Thanks for reviewing though!

Dear \*\*Brittany\*\*: Thank you so much! I'm glad my fanfiction cheered you up a bit! I know how it feels. Sometimes, after watching a really sad anime, I need to read some fanfiction based on the anime to get my mind off of the tragic ending. Once again, thank you!

Dear \*\*Anon\*\*: Last time I checked, Kazama was his last name and Chikage was his first name. I could be wrong, but since I've already written most of the story in that format, I might as well you so much for the wonderful compliments though! ^^

Dear \*\*3Lucy3Natsu3\*\*: Yupp! Kaoru will most definitely have an appearance in this story! Thanks for reviewing!

## 10. Chapter 9

Hey guys! I'm back! I know it's been a while... I've been lazy...and you know... there's school... and my extracurricular activities...and more laziness...but yeah! I'm back with another short chapter! :D LALALALOVE me.

\*No F4 in this chapter.

\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki. \*\*

\* \* \*

><p>"<em>Chizuru! You're all covered in mud!" Her mother's distinct voice was muffled as a towel was placed over her head. The maid nearest to her began to dry her hair gently. "You too, Kaoru!" She heard her mother say. <em>

"\_I'm sorry, mother. We were making wreaths out of the flowers when it started raining," Kaoru explained while having his hair dried by the other maid. \_

"\_Well, how did you manage to get this muddy?" their mother asked, worry and curiosity apparent in her tone. \_

"\_We fell," Chizuru giggled cheekily and flashed a toothy grin. Their mother and the maids around them sighed in unison.\_

"\_Chizuru, that's the third time this month. How often do you fall anyway?" \_

"\_Oh, no, it wasn't me this time. It was Kaoru! I just got pulled along!" Chizuru continued smiling innocently, pointing at her twin brother while doing so. All the maids eyed Kaoru and their mother's eyes followed suit after.\_

"\_Chizuru, are you sure you didn't hit your head?" Her mother's words were spoken rather mockingly. \_

"\_Young master Kaoru-sama never falls. You truly must have fallen on your head," the maids chimed in playfully. \_

"\_I'm not lying! I didn't fall!" Chizuru whined. \_

"\_Then explain why you look dirtier than Kaoru." \_

"\_He pulled me to the bottom! I swear! I. Didn't. Fall!"\_

\* \* \*

><p>"Ow! Okay, that's going to form a bump." Chizuru slowly got up and rubbed the sore area on her head. She had fallen off of her bed and onto the cold hard floor below. Fortunately, her bed was one of those really low ones. Thank god she didn't have enough money to buy a higher bed. Well, if she were to buy a higher bed, it would most likely be wider as well. Still, the way Chizuru slept, she would still have fallen off anyway.<p>

Realizing how dry her throat was, she quickly made her way to the kitchen to grab a cup of water. She gasped for air as soon as she finished chugging down the cup of cold liquid. Then, she made her way to the bathroom to prepare for work.

Today, being a Saturday, she was to work at the usual cafÃ©. She had homework that she should really start on, but for some reason, she just didn't feel like doing it. Bored, her mind began to wander. Yesterday was quite strange. Staying over at Kazama's place, borrowing his shower, having him blow dry her hair, everything was just out of the ordinary. No normal person would be able to do all of that, but Kazama had let \_her\_ experience it and no one else. It kind ofâ€¦made her feel special. Then again, he probably just had so much

money that he wouldn't mind if people came over and leeches off of him. Speaking of leeching off of him, Kazama did ask her to live with him. Perhaps he did just have too much money to waste.

By the time Chizuru came back to the present, time had passed. Work starts at noon and 10 o'clock had just passed. Staring at the clock, she realized just how bored she was. If she wasn't going to start on her homework, she might as well make good use of her time. Well, it's nice to go to work early sometimes. With that thought in mind, she headed off to work.

Upon entering the shop, the first person she noticed was someone she hadn't expected.

"Risa!" She called out, running towards the familiar girl.

"Chizuru? Oh my gosh!" She ran towards Chizuru too and closed the distance with a quick hug. "I've missed you so much!"

"Same!" They haven't seen each other since junior high ended. She's called Risa over the phone a couple of times, but that's practically it.

"So? How's it going?" Risa asked, encouraging her to speak.

"With what?" Chizuru tilted her head curiously.

"You know, everything! School, teachers, friendsâ€|guysâ€|" She trailed off.

"Guys?" Chizuru nearly choked. Last time she checked, she hadn't told her anything about Kazama.

"Yeah! You're so cute, so I'm sure there must have been some confes-"

"Risa! Get back to work! This isn't your break!" A loud voice rang from the kitchen.

"Alright already! Sheesh!"

"Hold onâ€|" Chizuru finally realized what her best friend was wearing. Fitting perfectly on Risa's tall model-like frame was the cafe's uniform! "You work here now?"

"Yupp! My parents said I needed a better way to spend my free time. They say free time, but I'm really just procrastinating," she whispered the last part, her hand hovering over her mouth for emphasis. Wow, guess a lot of people do this thing called "procrastinating." \_ Chizuru giggled.

"That's great! I work here too!"

"Really? Then we'll see each other a lot!" Risa broke into a wide grin immediately.

"You two can have your little chat while working," the manager's strict voice came from behind. They muttered a slight "yes" before heading towards the staff room.



\* \* \*

><p>"Chizuru."<p>

She perked up at the sound of her name. "What is it?"

"I have someone I like."

Chizuru stared at Risa with a blank face. After a minute, her mind registered what she just heard. "Oh. I see." She'd be lying if she were to say that this wasn't awkward. "Soâ€¦ What kind of a guy is he?"

"Well, he's really nice and athletic." She paused, thinking of what to say next. When Chizuru didn't comment, she continued. "We met on the first day of school. We were both lost, so we decided to help each other."

"Oh, that's cool." Chizuru didn't know what else to say. In all honesty, she knew nothing about love and relationships. Basically, she wasn't the person you would go to for love advice.

"So, umâ€¦ is there anyone you like, Chizuru?" Risa asked, suddenly changing the topic. Her eyes, which were averted previously, met Chizuru's again. Her tone rose noticeably and she sounded rather excited.

Out of instinct, Chizuru shook her head rapidly.

"No way!"

"Really?"

An image of Kazama appeared in her mind.

"Yes!"

"Not even someone you're interested in?"

She tried to get the picture out of her head, but it wouldn't leave.

"No!"

"Any guys bothering you about anything?"

She suddenly remembered Kazama's proposal yesterday. \_"Chizuru, live with me." \_His words flashed in her head.

"No!"

"Really?"

"Well, no." Oh, what the heck. Risa was her best friend. They promised to tell each other everything. And while Risa was being honest and telling her about the guy she liked, she kept quiet about her own life. She couldn't do that. That wasn't what best friends would do. "Actually, there has been this littleâ€¦ problemâ€¦ that's been bothering me lately," she explained slowly, letting the image of Kazama fill her head.

\* \* \*

><p>"You should live with him," Risa didn't even spare a minute as she blurted out her opinion. Chizuru had explained the whole incident to her, ending the story with Kazama's offer.<p>

"What? Are you out of your mind? You paid attention to the whole thing, didn't you? You know how popular that guy is! I can't just barge into his mansion and start living with him!" Chizuru voiced loudly, earning a look from the manager.

"Well, if you live with him, you won't have to worry about money. You won't have to work at this crappy place either!" Risa suggested, completely ignorant to the glares the manager was sending in their direction.

"This cafÃ© isn't crappy, Risa," Chizuru objected quickly before the manager could decide to kill her. "And I don't really mind working here." \_I mean, \_ t\_he manager is really niceâ€|when he's not angry.\_

Risa stared at her friend for a while with a thoughtful look. "Chizuru, face it. You're very lucky, being invited to live with that Kazama-sama guy. And based on what you told me, it seems that he knows you pretty well. You should trust him more!"

"Gee, aren't you even the least bit worried about your best friend being abducted by him? You never know; he might be lying about knowing me in the past," Chizuru lowered her voice to a whisper as she spoke.

"Chizuru, he's helped you this much. You stayed over for one night, completely vulnerable in your ill state, and he didn't do anything to you. If he's as great as he sounds, he should be trustworthy."

"But -"

"Chizuru," Risa spoke, cutting her off. "You should worry about yourself more. Sometimes, you just have to rely on others," she smiled gently, putting a reassuring hand on Chizuru's shoulder.

"I guessâ€|" Chizuru mumbled. Risa was right. Kazama was just trying to be nice, but living with someone else was on a completely different scale than living by yourself. It would be hard to get used to.

"Chizuru. Don't give me that look. It's not that complicated. If I were you, I would have accepted a long time ago! I rather live with someone with money than work my butt off on my weekends," Risa went on and on about her complaints. Suddenly, Chizuru heard rough footsteps behind her. Hesitantly, she turned around and came face to face with none other than their manager.

"Oh, hi manager!" Chizuru forced a cheerful grin, lifting a hand to wave at the 40 year old woman growling in front of her.

"Risa!" The woman stomped right pass Chizuru, not even sparing a look at the poor girl, and towered over Risa. "I just hired you today and

you're already being a bad influence to Chizuru?!"

"Umâ€|no?"

Chizuru watched as Risa mentally crumbled under their manager's menacing glare.

\* \* \*

><p>"It's been a while since we've walked together like this, hasn't it?"<p>

"Yes, it has," Chizuru agreed with Risa. As they walked down the street, Risa linked her arm with Chizuru's just like they did in the past. It brought back a sense of nostalgia as the two watched the evening sun set. "Risa, please don't get fired."

"Hm? That's kind of hard. I mean, I barely escaped today's lecture." She ended her reply with a light laugh.

"I want to continue working with you there," Chizuru commented, eyes focused on something far in the distance.

"Is that what's stopping you from living with that guy?"

Chizuru had to think before she answered. If she were to live with Kazama, that wouldn't change anything. Assuming he doesn't occupy her weekends, she can still work at the cafÃ©. So, what \_was\_ Chizuru so worried about?

"Not really. I'm justâ€| not prepared for it."

"Are you scared?"

"NO!" Chizuru shot, startling Risa who immediately flinched. "Who would be scared? I'm just not ready; that's all."

\* \* \*

><p>"Chizuru, have you thought about my offer at all this past weekend?" Kazama's shadow loomed over her own as Chizuru ate the food prepared for her during lunch.<p>

"Umâ€| actually, I did," she answered as soon as she finished swallowing the food that was in her mouth.

"And?"

"What do you mean?" She mumbled, chopsticks resting on her lips. Today's lunch was a bento filled with all kinds of traditional Japanese food. It was quite different from what she had expected, but nonetheless, delicious.

"Do you have a new answer for me?"

"A \_new\_ answer?"

"Don't you remember what you said as soon as I asked you on Friday?"

"No?"

"Exactly."

"Wait, what?"

"You said 'no'."

"Oh! I, umâ€¦" she stuttered. She had originally meant "no" as in "no, I don't remember," but Kazama must have misinterpreted it for her actual answer.

"Well, I need more time to think."

"I see. It may have been too sudden," Kazama said, his crimson eyes examining her face.

"Umâ€¦is there something on my face?" She asked slowly, wiping her lips with her thumb while doing so.

"No, there isn't," he turned away.

"Then why were you staring at me?" She asked, putting her chopsticks down. Suddenly, she didn't have much of an appetite anymore. Having Kazama stare at you eat wasn't exactly veryâ€¦ welcoming.

"Would it make you feel better if I let you eat with yourâ€¦friends?" Kazama suddenly asked. His face remained fixed on the other direction.

"What? I was never feeling-"

"Why don't you eat with them for today? I have no tasks for you at the moment," he began to walk away. "You are dismissed, Chizuru," he ended sharply.

\* \* \*

><p>Kazama was acting really strange today. It wasn't as though he was normal to begin with, but today, he was about 30% weirder than he normally was. Why was he so eager in letting her go? Was he not interested in her anymore? Or maybe she was simply annoying and just wasn't helping out with the student council activities? Come to think of it, even though Chizuru was assigned the position of secretary, she was never actually given a task to do. For what reason did she join the council again? Oh, right. He forced her to.<p>

She sighed, opening the door to the rooftop where she knew her friends would be. More thinking wouldn't do her any good. For now, she just had to enjoy the lunch he had given her with her friends.

\* \* \*

><p>"Why did you kick out the little princess like that?" A playful raspy voice came from the doorway.<p>

"I didn't kick her out," Kazama replied, ignoring Chizuru's new nickname.

"Alright. Let me rephrase that. Why did you let her off the hook today?" An annoyed Shiranui walked into the room, hands folded on the back of his head in a laid-back manner.

"I can do whatever I want," Kazama answered vaguely.

"Do you hate her now or something?"

Hah, Shiranui should have known better. Kazama would never hate her.

"Did you lose interest in her?"

Lose interest? Never.

"Or maybe you're just plain annoyed of her?"

Annoyed? More like he will never have enough of her.

"Or-"

Kazama's right eye twitched involuntarily. What was with all these questions?

"Shiranui, if you continue asking all these questions, you'll be the one kicked out, along with the paperwork that's due tomorrow of course." He smirked in victory as Shiranui mumbled something unpleasant and got out of his sight.

\* \* \*

><p>Sorry it was so short! Please <strong>review<strong>! Positive or negative, I still love to read them!

Dear \*\*LuckyLucy\*\*: LOL Yeah, I agree. I think of it too. ;) Thanks for understanding! I really appreciate it! Thanks for reading and reviewing!

Dear \*\*aizawa saki\*\*: Haha, Shiranui's so dirty. He makes people think wrong on purpose. I would love to see your drawings! ^^ Thanks for reading and reviewing!

Dear\*\* Stalianha\*\*: LOL I don't mind if you complain. I think it will help me write longer chapters. xD That, or I'm just not creative enough. :( LOL Aren't you happy? It just so happens that Heisuke isn't in this chapter either. And there's a short memory in the beginning too. :) Thanks for understanding! I don't want to give up writing this no matter how bad it turns out. I can just rewrite it later. xD Thanks for reading and reviewing!

## 11. Chapter 10

Hey guys! I'm back!

>It's been so long and I know how late and short this update is!

:(<br>Anyway, I'm really sorry for the delay!

>Good or bad, I appreciate reviews!<p>

\*Little bit of F4 in this chapter.

**\*\*Disclaimer: Do I ever own Hakuouki? No, no I don't.\*\***

\* \* \*

><p>As soon as she opened the door to the rooftop, she was welcomed by a soft breeze and the warm rays of the sun. As expected, her friends were there, sitting in their little deformed circle and munching on their lunches. Heisuke was the first to react.<p>

"Chizuru! You're here!"

"Uhâ€|yeah. Do you mind if I eat with you guys?" She asked, closing the heavy door behind her.

"We don't mind," Heisuke broke into a cheerful smile. He immediately shifted over to give her some room to sit.

"Thanks," she smiled back.

"What happened to the student council? Aren't you supposed to eat with them?" Okita questioned curiously.

"Kazama-sama told me that I can eat with you guys today."

"Well, that's wonderfully kind of him," Okita commented in a sarcastic tone.

"Suspicious," Saitou suddenly said.

"Everything's suspicious to you. You gotta learn to chill," Heisuke teased, earning a glare from said man.

"So, how's it going lately? Anything new happen?" Okita tried to strike up a conversation, changing the topic while doing so. After all, what else were friends supposed to talk about after they've been separated for a while?

"Nothing much," she replied simply.

"Don't you have a lot of things to do in the student council?" Yamazaki spoke for the first time since she had joined them.

She compensated a little in her head and went over all the things she's done for the student council. The total amount of tasks she's been assigned so far: none. "Actually, no. I'm starting to wonder why I was even appointed to secretary of the council. I don't do anything at all."

"Is he bothering you?" Heisuke suddenly asked.

"He?"

"Kazama."

"Oh. Wellâ€|" she hesitated, "not exactly."

Her friends looked at her with concern as she stared hard at the floor. She was currently debating in her head whether to tell them

about Kazama's offer or not. Oh well, it wouldn't hurt, right? Maybe I can even get some of their opinions. "Actually, he asked if I, umâ€¦wanted to live with him or not."

"What?!" Everyone, including the ever so calm and composed Saitou, blurted out.

"What a brave guy, asking a girl to live with him so freely." She swore she saw a shadow across Okita's eyes as he spoke these words. Heisuke wasn't taking the news so easily either.

While all of them knew that Chizuru wasn't living in the luxury she used to live in anymore, none of them knew to what extent of poverty she had to deal with, excluding Heisuke. He had seen her house before and it was definitely not a very comfy place to live in, especially if you have experienced the luxury of the Yukimura household before. He couldn't imagine how she had dealt with the drastic changes in her life. In a way, Kazama had made the right choice. And since he was originally her fiancÃ©, he had every right to take her in and care for her.

"So, I was wondering what I should do," Chizuru continued on.

"Decline," Okita, Saitou, and Yamazaki said without further delay.

"Accept."

Everyone turned towards Heisuke who looked up in response.

"Heisuke, have you gone nuts? Just why should she accept that guy's offer?" Okita narrowed his eyes at the boy.

"It's best for her," was all he said before he turned back to his lunch, ending the conversation altogether.

\* \* \*

><p>"Chizuru-san!" A semi-familiar voice rang in her ears. She turned around to see a cheerful Shizuka bounce her way. "Hi!"<p>

"Hi," Chizuru smiled.

"Umâ€¦ I have a favour to ask of you," Shizuka looked down bashfully. Chizuru couldn't help but notice her long and fine eyelashes. She looked exactly like a doll with that curly caramel hair of hers.

"Sure, what is it?"

"Would you pleaseâ€¦set me up on a date with Kazama-sama?" The petite girl whispered.

"What?" Chizuru was caught off guard. She looked down at the girl in front of her. Her eyes shone like the eyes of a girl in love.

"No?" Shizuka sounded disappointed, striking a chord in Chizuru. She didn't want to appear mean and unreliable to her new friend. Asking Kazama something like this was definitely going to cost her, but she

would rather help and regret it after than regret not helping out.

"I'll help you."

\* \* \*

><p>What has Chizuru gotten herself into? She had just promised Shizuka something that she was sure Kazama would not agree to.<p>

"Hey."

Knowing the guy, he wouldn't even spare Shizuka a glance before declining the date.

"I said, hey."

Well, then again, Shizuka's really cute. Who knows? Maybe Kazama would fall for her charms.

"Hasn't the Yukimura family ever taught their precious jewel manners?"

â€|but it's Kazama! That guy never feels any emotions for anybody! Not like she was confident in the idea of it or anything, but she was sure Kazama would rather date Chizuru than Shizuka, just because they were "childhood friends."

Suddenly, Chizuru felt an arm drape over her shoulders.

"Who gave you the right to ignore me so many times?" An amused voice inquired her. Chizuru looked up and was met by a pair of blood red orbs. Kazama.

"Were you thinking about me just now?"

Chizuru didn't answer. The truth wasâ€|she had been thinking about him, but she couldn't just tell him that, could she? She can't hide it from him forever either. Shizuka needed a response to the date sooner or later. It wouldn't do Chizuru or Shizuka any good if she were to delay this matter.

Kazama seemed to have been satisfied enough by her silent answer, because he began to pull away.

\* \* \*

><p>After having his offer rejected, Kazama had temporarily given up the idea of inviting Chizuru to live with him. Certainly, this meant he had also (temporarily) given up forcing her to quit her job, but no one said he had to be cooperative about it. Scowling the whole time, Kazama glared at Chizuru every time she delivered dishes to the customers' tables, took orders, cleaned up a table, or any task in general.<p>

"Can you please stop glaring at me, Kazama-sama?" Chizuru had come up to Kazama's table in a matter of seconds. With her hands on her hips, she looked almost like a mother scolding her child.



"If you don't like it, then make me stop."

"I don't really mind if you glare at me, but you're scaring the customers. They think you're some creepy stalker who's waiting for me to get off work, so you can kidnap me or something." That was partially true. Okay, maybe it wasn't true at all. No one really thought that way, but if she could get him to stop glaring at her, then why not give it a shot?

"Did they really say that now?" Dang, and she was so close.

"No, but I'm sure they're thinking that."

"Then, I'm not stopping."

Chizuru sighed and got back to work, trying her best to ignore the constant glares sent her way.

\* \* \*

><p>Chizuru didn't know what to do. Work had gotten her mind off of things, but it was now or never. She can't break off her promise with Shizuka just because she's a little scaredy-cat. Shizuka had asked her confidently, so she should do the same. And it's not like she's the one asking for a date here. Still, how would she bring the topic up?<p>

"Oh, I have this friendâ€¦well, she's not exactly my friend-friend. I mean, I only met her recently, but she really seems to dig you. Oh yeah, and she wants a date with you, soâ€¦what do you say?" Nope, that's way too casual.

"Shizuka-san from class 1B would like a date with you. I would appreciate it if you accept." That's kind ofâ€¦stiff.

"Shizuka. My class. Date her." No, just no.

As Chizuru thought over this, Kazama spoke up.

"If there's something you want from me, you know you can ask me."

\_Yeah right, you'll probably blackmail me or something, \_Chizuru thought, eying Kazama carefully.

"What's with that look? You don't trust me?"

"It's not that I don't trust youâ€¦it's justâ€¦too good to be true."

At that, Kazama turned around and faced Chizuru. "What do you take me for? I'm not some poor peasant who only cares about himself."

\_Strangely, that sounds exactly like him, except for the "poor peasant" part, of course.\_

Kazama sighed. "That's not very nice."

"W-what?I didn't say anything."

"You were thinking of it."

\_Okay, that's true,\_ Chizuru admitted. As she did so, she heard Kazama smirk.

"Well, I won't be doing anything for free. I \_do\_ want something from you."

"H-huh?"

"It's a fair trade. I'll do something for you as long as you return the favour back."

"Oh." What would Kazama ask for though? She didn't have anything of important value, at least not that she knew of.

"Don't worry, I won't ask you for much." When Chizuru didn't speak up, he continued. "I want you to do something that only you can accomplish."

"And what would that be?"

"I want you to call me like how you used to call me." Chizuru stared silently at him. How was she supposed to know what she used to call him? Did he expect her to just remember something like that randomly? She still doesn't remember if Kazama was even her childhood friend or not. Noticing her confusion, Kazama continued on.

"â€|Chika-chan."

"What?"

"Call me Chikage."

That wasn't what he had said before. Nevertheless, she nodded, albeit hesitantly.

\* \* \*

><p>As promised, Kazama had walked her to her front doorstep. As soon as she was sure he had left, she closed the door and proceeded to her room where she slumped into her bed.<p>

Chizuru thought over their previous conversation. \_I just have to call him by his name, right? \_He had told her to call him "Chikage" if she ever wanted something from him. \_That's quite useful, but calling him without an honorific isâ€|\_ It would definitely be hard to get used to. And there was also that "Chika-chan" he had just mentioned. \_Chikage, Chika-chanâ€|\_ There was no doubt that "Chika-chan" was a nickname for Chikage.

"Chika-chan." That name sounded so familiar on her tongue. "Chikage." Definitely less familiar.

\_Wait a minute, \_Chizuru suddenly sat up. \_All I have to do is call him "Chikage" and ask him to go on a date with Shizuka!\_ It would be simple! Still, asking him to go on a date with a girl, who he most likely didn't know, was pretty outrageous. Not just Kazama, but any

guy in general would probably decline.

She'd just have to see how it goes tomorrow.

\* \* \*

><p>"You are dismissed."<p>

"What?" Chizuru stared wide-eyed at the man sitting in front of her.

"e He

You can go now," Kazama stared back, eyes never wavering.

"But I barely did anything! I just got here!" She had just entered the student council room and sat down on the usual couches. Sitting across from her was the, much like always, indifferent student council president of Kazama High. Sitting patiently on the tea table was her daily lunch box filled with delicious food. She was about to open the black box when he had uttered those words.

"You can go eat with them," Kazama said, ignoring her comment.

"Them?" Chizuru tilted her head in confusion. "Oh! You mean my friends?"

Kazama stayed silent and turned away from her. \_Is that a "yes?"

—

"Didn't you say that one of the conditions for receiving lunch from you was to eat here in the office?"

With a shallow sigh, he answered her. "Stop being so noisy and just do as I say."

Chizuru paused. That was the first time Kazama's ever been so annoyed by her presence. He hadn't sounded angry, but it wasn't in his usual teasing tone either. Somehow, that fact worried her. Maybe he was just extra tired today?

"I'm sorry," Chizuru said after a while. She didn't know what she had done wrong, but apologizing was the second best thing to do right now. The first best thing to do is leave. "I'll go."

\* \* \*

><p>Kazama realized a second too late that he shouldn't have said what he said. He hadn't said it angrily, but he did sound pretty annoyed. He was worried that she would fear him. Well, a little discipline here and there would be good too. She would just have to get used to it.<p>

It surprised him, however, when Chizuru came jogging back into the office.

"Chikage! Please go on a date with—"

"Oh, why if it isn't the little princess!"

\_Ugh! Shiranui! Why now of all times?\_ Chizuru was about to put all of the courage she had just mustered up into the request when Shiranui showed up.

"Shiranui, leave," Kazama demanded dangerously.

"What? I just got here! And I was even thinking of doing some work."

"Leave."

"Oh, okay then. I see how it is. Princess, I'll see you later, okay?" Shiranui smirked and patted Chizuru on the head roughly before speeding out the door. \_I don't want to see you later, \_Chizuru sighed.

"Now what were you saying, Chizuru?"

She turned her attention back on Kazama. Was it just her or does he seem much moreâ€¦| radiantâ€¦|.now? Weird.

"Oh, right. Umâ€¦| So, I was wondering if you could go on a date with-"

The moment passed by in slow motion for the man. Smirking smugly, the man crossed his arms in patience.

"-my friend."

What? What had he just heard? Now, it was his turn to stare wide-eyed at her.

Under his gaze, Chizuru twitched. "Umâ€¦| Ka- Chikage?"

After a while, his expression returned to normal.

"Alright" was all he said before smiling a fake smile.

\* \* \*

><p>Once again, sorry for the super late and short update!<br>Please review! Do tell me things you liked or disliked! Many thanks!  
^^

Responses to reviewers:

Dear \*\*aizawa saki\*\*: Thank you! I agree! Kazama's such a sexy little demon. 3 LOOL Okay, ignore me. Thanks for reading and reviewing!  
^^

Dear \*\*Stalianha\*\*: LOL Alright. Complain all you want. ^^ And I'm so sorry~ I'm really happy that you were sad when it ended though. LOL I'm not a sadist. I'm just an obsessed freak. Just a teensy bit of Heisuke in this chapter. Couldn't help it, sorry! Harharhar, Shizuka's back! And she's already turning into a female dog (if you get my drift.) Risa is such a wise person. Good luck at college! Yes, let's both do our best! ;D Many thanks for reading and reviewing!

Dear \*\*Guest\*\*: Yeah, Risa is really smart... not academically though. :) LOL Yes, Chizuru can measure how weird Kazama is using numbers. I totally made that up just now. ;) Thanks for reading and reviewing!

## 12. Chapter 11

I know it's only been like...3 days since I've last updated, but I really wanted to update again. This is also to make up for my long absence from before. Please review! Thanks!

\*No F4

\*\*Disclaimer: I don't own Hakuouki.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Chizuru was confused, worried, and in shock. She hadn't expected <em>The</em> Kazama Chikage to accept her request so easily. She had to admit that she was curious about his change of attitude. It's not like she's going to stalk him or anything, but as she hides behind a large tree located a couple of metres away from the school gate where a certain two people were going to meet up, she had to correct herself.

\* \* \*

><p>"What?"<p>

"I'll go."

"Why?"

"What do you mean why? You don't expect me to go back on my words, do you?"

"What?"

"I promised you. As long as you call me by my first name, I will accept, no matter the request."

"Ohâ€¦I see." \_So that's why.\_

\* \* \*

><p>As she went over the conversation she had with Kazama, she felt so stupid. And here she thought that Kazama really had a special something for Shizuka. Just then, she notices Shizuka running towards the gate. Chizuru watched on, her body still hidden behind the tree.<p>

\_Ugh, I can't make out what they're saying,\_ Chizuru grumbled. \_Hold on, since when did I care?\_\_ Oh, right. I just want to make sure that Kazama won't do anything to her. It'd be bad if he started teasing her and she got scared. \_As she continued to calm herself in her mind, Kazama and Shizuka began to walk. \_Oh, no! They're gone!

—

Chizuru sighed, stepping out of her hiding spot. Who was she kidding?

She had no right to spy on their date. Sure, she was the one who set them up, but that doesn't mean she could follow them and watch their every move. Shrugging it off, she began to walk to work. Right away, she felt something was off. \_Oh right, I've been walking with Kazama-sama for these past few daysâ€¦\_ Strangely, she was already used to his presence. It's as if it was already a daily routine, walking to work with Kazama and such.

Before she realized it, Kazama had already made a big impact on her life.

\* \* \*

><p><em>Annoying customers,<em> Chizuru cursed in her mind. Most days are fine, but today, a customer just couldn't stop pissing her off.

Stepping out of the kitchen, Chizuru made her way to the table where a lady dressed in fancy clothing was waiting patiently for her food. Before she could get to the table, another customer walked into the cafÃ©.

"Welcome!" Chizuru smiled cheerfully. The customer, a man who was dressed in business attire, ignored Chizuru. Instead, he seemed to have found someone he knew and waved politely at her. Chizuru watched in awe as the man made his way to a table, continuing to ignore Chizuru's greeting.

\_Well then, he's probably just deaf\_, Chizuru reasoned, trying to calm her temper. She was never good at dealing with rude customers, but today just seemed to be that much harder. Hopefully, there won't be many uncooperative customers today.

Chizuru realized that she was still holding onto the plate of food, so she immediately made her way to the table where the lady sat. She noticed that the man, who had just walked in, sat beside her and was conversing with her.

"Hey, this wasn't what I ordered," the lady complained as soon as Chizuru placed the plate on the table.

"Umâ€¦yes, it is. You ordered the chicken and french fries combo with a large Pepsi." Chizuru double checked her notepad as she spoke.

"I ordered no such thing!" The woman denied.

"Miss, it's written right here," she showed the woman her notepad and pointed to her order.

"That's not mine," she turned away, facing the man again.

"What did you order then?" the man asked, eyeing the food disgustingly.

"I haven't even ordered yet. And I would never order something so greasy and fat!" The woman laughed mockingly, fluttering her thick eyelashes at the male.

\_Sounds pretty fake to me,\_ Chizuru sighed. Now she understood what was going on. The woman had originally planned to eat the chicken and

fries secretly. She didn't want anyone to see what she was eating, especially if it was someone she liked. Well, that's her guess anyway, but it's a pretty good guess, isn't it? With an idea in mind, Chizuru picked up the plate and spoke up.

"Miss, would you like me to dispose of this?" Chizuru offered, purposely putting the plate of food close to her nose so she could smell the aroma. She saw the woman twitch in annoyance before answering.

"Yes. Or better yet, you can eat it," the woman suggested before asking for a menu.

Well, that went well. At least she got a tiny reaction from her. That was all Chizuru had wanted. She sighed and began to walk back to the kitchen, but not before the woman asked to place her order.

\* \* \*

><p>"Chizuru, are you okay?"<p>

"Yes, why?"

"You seem to get angry...easier today."

"Oh." She hadn't noticed. Well, that would be a lie since the whole situation with the lady with heavy make-up earlier was pretty ugly. She hadn't done anything out of character, but her thoughts were far across the border. Her manager seemed to have noticed.

"Dear, I've known you for years. I know when there's something bothering you," the woman said. Chizuru's manager has always been the one to cheer her up whenever something was bothering her at work. In many ways, she was almost like a mother to her. Plus, her consolation was always the best.

"I'm sorry for all the trouble I've caused today," Chizuru mumbled an apology, bowing her head while doing so. "And thank you."

The manager nodded her head in understanding and uttered a few words of encouragement before leaving the staff room.

\_What's gotten into me?\_ Chizuru wondered to herself. \_It must be Shizuka and Kazama.\_ Somehow, the two together made her feel uneasy. It wasn't as though she liked Kazama in that way, but the thought of him treating another girl like how he treats her made her feel sick. She didn't like it when Kazama teased her, but it's better than not being able to see him at all.

So, in a way, she \_did\_ like him. She admired and respected his kindness, the way he cared about her, and the way he never gave up when his eyes were set on something. It was very Kazama-like of him. She didn't know how she knew that from just spending a couple of days with him. It was as though she really knew him from long ago. \_Childhood friendsâ€|that would explain why he's so determined to take care of me.\_ After all, friends wouldn't want friends to suffer. It's a natural instinct to protect the ones you care about.

Maybe it isn't so hard, figuring out Kazama's thoughts and actions.

\* \* \*

><p>"So, Kazama-sama, I was sayingâ€| "<p>

\_That little bratâ€|leaving me alone with such an annoying woman.\_

"â€|I'm really glad you accepted!"

\_I was the one who promised to accept all requests as long as she called me Chikage, but who knew she would have requested something like this?!\_

"â€|Kazama-sama?"

\_The next time I see her, I'll teach that little princess the wrath of Kazama Chikage. \_

"Kazama-sama?"

"What?"

"Oh! You finally responded! I've been calling your name for a while, but it seemed that you were in a maze of thoughts. Could you have been planning on where to go next?"

He stared at the girl, Shizuka. To any other guy, she appeared more than cute with those fluffy features of hers, but to Kazama, she was just like any other girl.

When it was obvious that he wouldn't answer, Shizuka hesitantly went on. It was pretty hard to strike up a conversation with Kazama Chikage. Many would call her brave for everything she's done to provoke a conversation up until now. "So, where would you like to go?"

Suddenly, Kazama had an idea. It was about time for Chizuru's second job at the cafÃ©. She wouldn't mind if they paid her a visit, would she? A smirk rested on his lips, however Shizuka mistook his smirk for a smile.

"Let's go to a cafÃ©."

Shizuka immediately brightened up. "Okay!"

\* \* \*

><p>"What are you two doing here?" Chizuru muttered, already lightheaded from the previous events that had happened only an hour earlier.<p>

"You're not going to welcome me like how you welcomed the customers in front of me?" Kazama asked with that smirk on his face. Funny how he said "me" when he was with Shizuka. It was almost as though he had completely forgotten about her existence. Ignoring this, Chizuru smiled at Shizuka.

"Welcome, Shizuka-chan! I'll bring you to your table," she said, already leading the way.



"Okay! Wow, I didn't know you worked here," Shizuka commented, taking her seat.

"I did," Kazama said smugly.

"You did?" Shizuka asked with disappointment audible in her voice.

"Yes, Kaza- Chikage's been here on several occasions," Chizuru said, glaring at said man without turning to face him.

"Chizuru, you guys are on a first name basis?" Shizuka asked, eyes wide.

"Well, yeah, basically. He said if I ever wanted something from him, then I should- "\_ Shoot! I shouldn't have said that!\_"

"You should?" Shizuka inquired, clearly waiting for her to finish her sentence.

"Um, never mind. Anyway, what do you want to order, Shizuka-chan?" It wouldn't do her any good if she were to expose the whole reason Kazama accepted the date in the first place.

"Oh! Um...Hmm, let me see. I wantâ€|" Shizuka traced her finger over the menu, pondering over what to order.

"I want you," Kazama suddenly said, wearing the same slanted smile on his perfect face. Shizuka seemed to falter a bit, but no one noticed. The two were too busy quarreling.

"I never asked you, did I?"

"As your customer, you should treat me equally."

"You're not even here to eat. I bet you're just here to cause trouble."

"I \_am\_ here to eat. I came all the way here to eat you."

"Sorry, I'm inedible."

"Guys!"

"What?" Chizuru asked. Kazama didn't move from his position and continued looking at Chizuru. Typical.

"I figured out what I want to order!" Shizuka cried out. Chizuru noticed the disappointment that was written all over her face. Oh right, their conversation just now would have hurt her feelings a lot.

"Shizuka-chan, I'm sor-"

"It's okay, but Chizuru-chanâ€|"

"Yes?"

"I want a strawberry cheesecake please."

\* \* \*

><p>"Well, guys. My shift's over. You guys should leave soon too. It's getting dark," Chizuru managed to say before she left the cafÃ© through the front door. She didn't want to be in the way of their date any longer. It was<em> their<em> date, no matter how one-sided it was for Shizuka, and she didn't have a right to interrupt. She breathed out and continued to walk quicker and quicker until it turned into a sprint.

\* \* \*

><p>"Let's stay here for just a while longer," Shizuka suggested. The cafÃ© operated 24 hours a day, but it was already that time of the day, so a big portion of the place was empty.<p>

"I'm leaving," Kazama said before standing up abruptly.

"Hey, wait!"

Kazama turned around, mostly because she was tugging on his uniform. "What do you want?" Shizuka didn't answer, so he continued. "I'm sure I made my feelings obvious enough already."

"That's not what I'm worried about!"

"Then what do you want? She left, so I have no other reason to be here." The truth is, he had sent a car out to make sure she got home safely. He had specifically told them to drive slowly and not make themselves obvious. Now, as he's being held back by the hands of this little girl, he wonders just how successful his team of security guards are.

"I have a requestâ€|my one last request."

\* \* \*

><p>"What? You guys lost her? How can you lose someone like that?"<p>

"Oh, I see. She was running. Why was she running?"

"Why are you so useless? Find her immediately!"

"Don't ask me how to find her! That's your job! Firstly, check if she's home!"

"You're already there? Are the lights on?"

"She's home? Alright. Good job. Make sure her door is locked. Drive her to school tomorrow too. I'll contact you tomorrow. Bye."

Kazama sighed and dropped his cell phone onto his bed. Then, he sat down next to it.

"\_I have a requestâ€| on last request."\_

"\_What makes you think I'll agree?"\_

"\_I'm fully aware that you didn't want to agree to this date. Kazama-sama, you're a cruel man, but you are not unfair. In compensation for something I want, I must give you something of great importance, am I correct?"\_

"...\_Go on."\_

"\_I will give you what you want, but in return, you must give me something that I want."\_

"\_Alright. Tell me what it is that you want."\_

"\_What I want is-"\_

Shizuka's request had surprised Kazama at first, but in due time, it would all be worth it.

\* \* \*

><p>Thanks for reading! Looking forward to reading reviews! Positive or negative, I love reading them!<p>

Dear \*\*Guest\*\*: Haha, so sorry! I know how long my chapters used to be, but I find that updating shorter chapters helps a lot! I really appreciate your review though! Thanks for reading and reviewing! :)

Dear \*\*Yehey\*\*: Thank you for reading and reviewing! I'm so glad you liked it! ^^

### 13. Chapter 12

Hello! I'm back! :D

I love hot anime bishies. What?

Please read and review! Thanks! ^^

\*F4 in this chapter.

\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>"Chizuru-chan, that looks good," Okita commented, peeking over Chizuru's shoulder to have a glance at her lunch. Today's lunch was a wide selection of tropical fruits and fresh vegetables for the salad, a steak of some sort (Chizuru had no idea what it was, since she wasn't quite used to seeing such luxury), accompanied with mashed potatoes. Come to think of it, this is the first time she's had non-Japanese food for lunch while eating with the guys. For the past few days, she's been having Japanese meals, so it didn't appeal to them that much.<p>

"It \_is\_ good," Chizuru said through bites of food.

"It's from the president, so of course it'd be good," Heisuke said, admiring the colourful display of fruits and vegetables in one section of the lunch box. (Hm, funny, one wouldn't think that Heisuke

was much of a vegetable-kind of guy...weird.)

Kazama, or most likely his maids, had purposely packed the foreign meal in a traditional Japanese lunch box, probably for convenience. It would definitely be a lot easier to carry than a plate. \_Does he really want me to eat with my friends that bad? \_Would he actually go into the trouble of packing it in a lunch box just so she could easily carry it out of the student council office?

In fact, today, she didn't even need to go to the student council office. Her lunch was delivered to her by Amagiri, much to everyone's surprise. He told her that she could eat with her friends for lunch and that there was nothing new on the agenda for her to do. \_How strange, \_it was as though Kazama didn't want her near him anymore, but that wouldn't make any sense. Just yesterday, Kazama had come to visit the caf  she worked at. What could that have meant then? She seriously needed to rethink this whole thing.

\_Maybe I'll ask him directly. \_There was no point in beating around the bush. Determined to get the answer out of Kazama, she continued filling her cheeks with the delicious food. Returning the lunch box would be a good excuse to enter the student council office; she didn't want to appear desperate to meet him. If that idea got into Kazama's head, she didn't know what kind of misfortunes would happen to her.

"Chizuru, are you going to share that?" Heisuke asked all of a sudden, practically drooling.

She swallowed the food abruptly to answer his question. "If you want some, sure."

"Great!" Heisuke exclaimed, getting ready to poke at a piece of meat Chizuru had just sliced.

"Heisuke-kun," Okita grabbed Heisuke's hand right before his chopsticks could touch the piece of food. "This is Chizuru's lunch and she deserves \_all\_ of it."

"It's okay, Okita-senpai. You can have some too," Chizuru offered.

"Really?" He asked, surprised.

"Of course! Everyone can have some. Besides, I won't be able to finish all of this." Kazama always brings too much food for her. Did he expect her to finish all of it by herself? She doesn't eat that much  does she?

"Hey, Chizuru-chan. Will you feed me?" Okita's mischievous voice interrupted her thoughts.

"H-huh? Um  that's kind of  um, embarrassing." She looked to the side, seeking help from the stoic Saitou sitting beside her. She's never fed anyone besides herself before. And wasn't feeding each other what couples do? The last thing she would want is to start a scandal of some sort with Okita. She's heard some rumours about Okita being a playboy, but she's chosen to ignore these rumours and get to know Okita for who he is and not for what he does. It wouldn't do her any good now if she were to be one of the many girls involved in

his...love affairs.

"Souji, I'd expect you to be more mature than this, but it seems as though I've overestimated you," Saitou said monotonously.

\_That's a bit harsh.\_ Chizuru wondered if she had made the right choice, getting help from Saitou.

"Um, Saito-"

"I'm honoured that you thought so highly of me," Okita commented, cutting Chizuru off.

"Yes, and I seem to have expected too much from you."

"Oh, so you \_do\_ make mistakes sometimes, Hajime-kun. Guess you aren't as perfect as I thought."

"Perfection is not something humans can achieve; it's impossible to be perfect."

"\_You're\_ impossible to deal with."

"...May I take that as a compliment?"

"Do whatever you want...but..."

"But what?"

"â€|The fact that I will never be able to get along with someone as emotionless as you will never change."

"Better than someone who plays around with a girl's emotions."

"What are you implying?"

"Nothing much. Just that you're a flirt who will never learn the meaning of true love."

"And you're telling me that \_you\_ know what this so-called 'true love' is?"

"As a matter of fact, I do."

\_This seriously doesn't look too good,\_ Chizuru thought, inwardly blaming herself for starting this whole mess. She stood up, holding the lunch box in one hand.

"Really? Then prove it to me."

"Guys, stop it. I have to go-" Suddenly, she felt a pair of slim arms circle around her body from the side; a chin rested gently on top of her head.

"Saitou?" She heard Heisuke say.

Chizuru, startled by the sudden embrace, dropped her lunch box onto the floor. Luckily, it was wrapped in a piece of cloth, so none of its contents spilled out.

"Saitou-san?"

"Do you believe me now?" Although Saitou's rigid voice was close to her ears, the question had been directed at Okita, who only glared in return.

"You like Chizuru-chanâ€¦is that right?" He questioned accusingly.

"Is there a problem?" Saitou didn't flinch as he answered Okita's question with his own. Then, he bent down to grab the lunch box, returning it to Chizuru. Before Okita could say anything, Saitou mumbled a quick "let's go" and gently pushed Chizuru out the door.

The two left the rooftop, leaving a confused Heisuke and a scowling Okita behind.

\* \* \*

><p>"Saitou-san! What was that?!" Chizuru cried out as soon as they were alone.<p>

"Nothing of your concern."

"I think this \_is \_a topic of my concern. Please give me an explanation for what just happened." Chizuru's head was currently a jumbled mess of Kazama, Okita, and Saitou. She was still worried about Kazama's attitude towards her as well as the way Okita looked when they had left (she didn't even want to get started about Heisuke), but getting answers out of Saitou came first.

The disciplinary member looked forward, as if he was pondering over something, and then turned to look at Chizuru.

"It was simply to prove Souji wrong. Do not fret over it."

\_Oh, okay.\_ "I see."

"It doesn't cause you any inconvenience, does it?"

"No," Chizuru replied. It's not as though they have to act like a couple, so it wouldn't trouble her at all, having Saitou have a fake crush on her. Still, both Okita and Saitou would go pretty far to prove the other wrong. What kind of friendsâ€¦|

"Yukimura, Saitou, what are you guys doing here?"

They both turned around to see whoever had called out to them.  
"Yamazaki-san! Oh, umâ€¦| I was just about to head over to the student council office."

"I have a disciplinary meeting to attend. Now, if you'll excuse me." And just like that, Saitou walked away. \_Oh! And I was just about to ask him about his childhood with Okita-senpai, \_Chizuru sighed.

"How about you, Yamazaki-san? You weren't at the rooftop just now," Chizuru turned back to Yamazaki.

"I had an errand to run for Sannan-sensei."

"Sannan-sensei?"

"The school doctor; I'm his assistant."

"Oh, right!"

"Anyway, if you ever have any injuries, do pay a visit to the infirmary. If Sannan-sensei isn't there, I'd be more than happy to treat your wounds," Yamazaki said kindly.

"Oh, thank you," Chizuru smiled. It would definitely feel better if someone she knew were to treat her wounds, no matter how well trained the doctor was. "Well, I have to go now. I can't keep the president waiting for his lunch box forever."

"Oh, alright. See you later."

She waved to him and then made her way down the halls. Standing in front of the student council office now, she was about to open the door when she heard a loud "thump" sound. \_What could that have been?\_

She quickly opened the door and rushed in, worried that someone might have gotten hurt. However, what she saw was nowhere near what she had predicted.

Seated on the floor was Kazama. His tie, she noticed, was taken away from him and was thrown onto the floor about a metre away. His dress shirt was unbuttoned at the top, revealing his well toned chest. With his hair slightly ruffled and bathing in the golden rays of the mid-afternoon sun, he resembled an angel of death (his crimson eyes could never be regarded as angelic). Crouching down in front of Kazama was a girl with petite features—Shizuka! She was sitting on Kazama's bent leg and her delicate arms were wrapped around his shoulders. Their faces were suspiciously close as well. No matter how you looked at this, they were obviously doing something rather—inappropriate, or at least they were about to.

Chizuru stared. Kazama and Shizuka stared back.

After a moment of staring, Chizuru backed up. As tempting as it was for Chizuru to further examine Kazama's alluring form, the way Shizuka was pressed up against him made her look away.

"Oh, um—I'm sorry. I-I should have kn-knocked first," she stuttered, taking her eyes off of the scene in front of her. "I'll—um—go now." She turned and quickly walked away, slamming the door behind her.

\* \* \*

><p><em>They didn't follow me—<em> Chizuru was currently seated under a large tree, which provided shade from the scorching hot afternoon sun. \_That must mean they don't mind if everyone finds out about—their relationship.\_ She sighed; she's been doing that a lot lately. There's no point in worrying about it. Even if they don't follow her, she won't say anything about what she just witnessed. She wasn't a tattletale, no matter how much she wanted to ramble on and on about it to someone. She simply sighed once more before standing

up and walking to her next class.

\* \* \*

><p><em>Alright! I'm going to run nonstop until I forget about it!  
<em>Chizuru braced herself with a determined look. It was currently gym class and Kimigiku-sensei had told them to do as many laps as they wanted. Those who want to play sports can do so. It was kind of like a study period, but for gym. They had gym every other day, so there was no need to rush the curriculum. Since the school was solely for students who come from prestigious and/or famous families, keeping a healthy body was essential, so having gym class every other day was a given.

As Chizuru ran around the track though, she noticed that many of the students were slacking off while some were simply walking around. Her eyes spotted Shizuka, who turned her head away in response. \_"What was that?"\_ She completely ignored her!

Then again, it was probably only by coincidence that she had turned away just then. Maybe she didn't see her or something; she couldn't blame everything on the girl. It also wasn't her thought that they were doing "stuff" in the student council office. \_"Yeah, like, totally, it wasn't her fault at all."\_

\_Ugh! Listen to yourself, Chizuru! You're sounding more and more like an ex-girlfriend who wants her boyfriend back!\_ Chizuru smacked herself on the cheeks and continued jogging, breaking off into a sprint when she reminded herself that she was never Kazama's girlfriend in the first place.

\* \* \*

><p>"Chizuru, let's hang out after school," Heisuke spoke cheerfully, walking up to her as soon as gym class ended.<p>

"Sorry, I have to go to work," she smiled apologetically.

"Oh, then how about tomorrow?"

"I have work every day after school, so no."

"Oh, then how about on the weekend? Maybe this Saturday?"

"I have work on the weekends too."

"..." The last time someone said these lines to Heisuke, he found out that they were lying. Heisuke examined the girl's expression: no signs of any irregular movements. \_"She's not lying." "Listen, Chizuru, you're working way too much." She's a high school girl! Aren't high school girls supposed to "I don't know, worry about their nails half of the time and then about boys the other half?"

"Well, you may be right, but I have to."

"You have to "..."?"

"Yeah, I mean, money doesn't just poof out of my pockets," Chizuru explained, using wild hand gestures while doing so.



"Well, if it's just money, I can lend you some." He was sure that his mother would have been more than happy to lend a little bit of money to the Yukimuras' daughter.

As helpful as his offer was, Chizuru knew she had to refuse. "No, I don't want to be in debt to you, Heisuke-kun, but thank you."

Heisuke watched as the girl broke into a smile. As he did this, he couldn't help but notice the dark circles that were beginning to form underneath her eyes. "Chizuru, you should get some rest from time to time."

"What are you talking about? I sleep every night."

"Chizuru!" Heisuke sighed, combing his hair roughly with his hand. "Just promise me you won't overexert yourself."

She looked at Heisuke's exhausted form as he thought about her well-being and smiled. "Heisuke-kun, I really appreciate your concern, but I think you should get some rest too. You look awfully tired as well."

"Um, no that's not why I'm exhausted right now." Didn't she know that he was only tired because he was worried about her? \_Geez, Chizuru can be so oblivious sometimes.\_

\* \* \*

><p>It was after school and if Chizuru didn't know better, she would have thought that Kazama would be waiting for her by the school gates, just like what he's been doing for the past few days. The closer she got to the gates, the more she doubted that he was waiting there. And as she arrives at the front gate, she knew for a fact that he wouldn't be here. She shook her head, mostly to herself, and continued walking towards her first part time job. Since when did she even care about this? It wasn't like having Kazama gone from her life was a bad thing. <em>I mean, if he's gone, it would even be a good thing! <em>He wouldn't bother her anymore and she wouldn't have anything to do with him. The idea sounded like a perfect dream, but then why wasn't she happy?

Suddenly, a black limousine slowly pulled up on the road beside Chizuru and the shaded windows rolled down, almost in a creeping manner.

"Kazama-sama!" She gasped as her mind slowly registered the man sitting inside the limo.

"What happened to calling me by my first name? And you were even so good at it too." He smirked teasingly.

"Th- that's only when I have a request!"

"Oh, you listen to orders well," he mused.

Chizuru paused; was he praising her? Or was that just some sort of comeback he had for her? Well, that wasn't important right now. "So, why are you here?"

"Come in the car," he said, opening the door and letting her in. Chizuru didn't move an inch and stood there, staring with a confused expression on her face.

"Why?"

"Don't ask questions; just hurry and come in." He didn't let her speak another word as he pulled her arm, along with the rest of her body, into the car.

\* \* \*

><p>Phew! I can go to school with nothing to worry about now! LOL Looking forward to reading reviews!<p>

Dear\*\* LuckyLucy\*\*: You're welcome! I'm so glad you enjoyed the chapter! And thanks a bunch for reading and reviewing! ^^

Dear \*\*Sam\*\*i: Haha! Thank you so much! I really appreciate the support! Thanks for reading and reviewing! :)

Dear \*\*Stalianh\*\*: LOL I love making Kazama call Chizuru a brat; I find it so cute! . And I also find Chika-chan cute too! Thanks for reading and reviewing!

#### 14. Chapter 13

How long was I gone for? o.o  
>Happy Halloween, guys!<p>

\*No F4.

\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki. \*\*

\* \* \*

><p>"Where are you taking me to, Kazama-sama?" Chizuru growled in a fearless voice (or as fearless as she could make it). It's kind of hard to be brave when you have just been dragged into a vehicle by Kazama. Yep, it was definitely scary, especially when he has such a stern look on his face.<p>

"Home," was all the demon said. That one word brought confusion to her.

"Wait, why? I have to go to work!"

Kazama looked over at the girl and sighed, the furrow in his brows fading away slightly before they appeared once again. "I'll take care of everything."

"What?" Take care of what? What's there to be taken care of? "Listen, I really have to get to work."

"Fasten your seatbelt."

\_What? Did he just ignore me?\_ Although shocked, Chizuru did as she was told and fastened her seatbelt. As she did so, the vehicle

stopped abruptly and her bag that had been on her lap the whole time slid down, making a loud thump. She prepared to grab it, but paused when Kazama picked it up for her instead. "Here," he said, passing the bag to her. "What do you even keep in it?"

"Hm? What do you mean?"

Kazama eyed the bag with a daunting look. "It's quite heavy."

"Oh, you know, just regular school stuff."

"It's that heavy?"

"Well, sure. We have textbooks and those things are pretty heavy." What? Has Kazama never carried a textbook before? It's as though he's never seen the troublesome sides of school before.

"You should have told me. I would have carried it for you."

Chizuru was taken aback. It was rare to see Kazama engaging in a "normal" conversation, but it was even rarer to hear him say something so...gentlemanly. Sure, he says something nice from time to time, but he always seems to have some kind of hidden motive behind those words. It was as though he was using kindness just to toy with her. Now, Kazama seemed truly troubled as he took the bag from her hands and proceeded to set it aside. "I'll carry it for you later."

"Huh? N-no! I can't make you do something like that!"

"We're almost there."

Again! He ignored her again! \_What's with him today?\_ Suddenly, she was reminded of the incident during lunch. She had seen him and Shizuka in the student council office doing something she would never expect from Shizuka, not to mention Kazama!

"Um, oh, uh...okay," she mumbled weakly.

\* \* \*

><p>"What is this?"<p>

"Your house."

"No, I mean the boxes. What's in them?"

Chizuru was currently standing at her door step with Kazama a couple of paces behind her. The first thing she noticed when she got home was the group of boxes placed in the middle of her apartment. The second thing she noticed was the empty space. Okay, she didn't have that many things to begin with, but she did have a table and a bed. And now, she couldn't see them anywhere.

She blinked, thinking that she was just seeing things. Right away, she knew who the culprit behind this was.

"Kazama-sama!" She yelled out angrily. "What did you do?!"

"I packed everything up."

"\_You\_ did?"

"My bodyguards did."

"And \_why\_?"

Kazama smirked before answering. "Isn't it obvious? You're going to live with me from now on."

\* \* \*

><p>"No!"<p>

"Everything's already packed."

"I can just unpack everything later!"

"Wouldn't that be troublesome?"

"I don't care! You have no right to just barge into my house and order your people to pack my stuff, furthermore, without asking!"

"If I had asked, would you still come and live with me?"

"â€|Well, no."

Kazama didn't say anything, but he gave a look that seemed to say "exactly."

"You could have given me some more time though." Her mouth curved downwards slightly into a pout.

"You took too long. I'm not that patient."

This time, it was Chizuru's turn to stay silent. Kazama watched as the girl lowered her eyes and looked at the ground in front of her. For a second, he was worried. Should he have asked her before he did all of this after all? The whole process of seeking permission first seemed too troublesome though. She was taking too long; that was all. If he hadn't taken action, she would have to suffer longer. He simply couldn't stand seeing her suffer. That was it, but why couldn't Chizuru understand that?

Her lips parted to speak and Kazama gave her his full attention again.

"Why do you kick me out of the student council office every day?" Her voice came as a whisper, but there was no doubt that Kazama had heard it. Chizuru covered her mouth as soon as she realized what she had said. \_Oh no! Why did I have to go and say something like that?\_ As she freaked out over her actions in her mind, Kazama's indifferent expression turned into one with surprise and then with interest.

"I didn't intend to kick you out."

"Then why did you tell me to eat with my friends every day?" Chizuru hadn't realized that her voice had risen again.

"Wouldn't you rather eat with your friends?"

Chizuru paused. She knew the answer to that question, but she was wise enough not to answer it. Kazama smirked, although compared to all his of other smirks, this one was filled with a tint of sadness.

"Thenâ€¦|wh-what were you do-doing with Shizuka-chan?"

Kazama had expected this question to come sooner or later, and he also knew that when Chizuru did ask this question, she wouldn't be able to look him in the eye. However, his expectations were proven wrong when Chizuru forced a straight expression and stared at him.

"Hm, do you really want to know?" He mused, smiling at the unexpected results. Chizuru never ceased to surprise him. That was one thing he absolutely loved about her: her unpredictably courageous side. It was a nice trait to have in a girl such as her; it addedâ€¦|spice to her personality.

"We-well, if you don't want to tell me, I won't for- force you to," she turned her head away this time, crossing her arms. She was, by no chance, a tsundere, but she has her moments.

"Don't worry, it was just a deal we made."

"A deal? You made a deal to do those kinds of things to each other?!" She shrieked.

Kazama stared in amazement, eyes slightly wide by her sudden outburst. "Doâ€¦|what kind of things?"

"Don't play innocent! I saw you guys getting ready to kiss! She was all over you!"

Kazama's eyes slowly narrowed in understanding. Then, he broke into a slanted grin, eyes glinting mischievously. "Are you perhaps, jealous?"

\_Am I jealous? Was\_ she jealous?

Kazama leaned forward, ducking below her bangs to catch a glimpse of the girl who had unknowingly lowered her head in thought again. The expression on the girl's face shattered his heart.

"Y-yes." Chizuru's eyes glistened and she realized that she was crying. It wasn't an all-out type of crying; there were only a couple of teardrops threatening to roll down her cheeks, but according to Kazama, that was enough to call it crying.

"Hey, what's wrong?"

There was no answer; only quiet sobs.

"Hey, answer me. Why are you crying?"

Cheeks bright pink and eyes squeezing shut, Chizuru tried her best to answer. "I'm not!" She lifted her hands to rub her eyes, but Kazama caught them before they could reach her face.

"Don't rub your eyes. It'll make the after effects even worse."

"Wh-what do you mean?" She managed to ask, opening her eyes just a peak.

"See? They're already red." Kazama placed her arms to her sides and with both thumbs, he gently wiped the tears away. Then, he leaned in. Not knowing what to expect, Chizuru squeezed her eyes shut again, hands forming fists for no apparent reason. The next moment, she felt something rather soft touch her forehead. She looked up and was met by Kazama's neck. \_What? \_Her mind was a mess and she didn't know what to do. She was frozen in place as his lips were lightly pressed onto her forehead and with each passing second, it felt as though he would never let go. With nothing else in sight, she kept her eyes on his Adam's apple, for the first time noticing the contour of it. Her cheeks flushed a bright colour the whole time and she tried to keep her breathing under control. She didn't want Kazama to think she was having an asthma attack from just a little contact.

After what seemed like forever, he leaned back and Chizuru could briefly make out the worried expression on his face before he changed it into a smile. She stared at the rare scene in front of her in disbelief. Kazama was smiling!

"You aren't crying anymore. That's good."

"Huh? Oh, um, yeah," she mumbled, her eyes never leaving his face.

"Hm? What? Is there something on my face?" He asked, his smile disappearing behind the newly formed smirk grazed on his lips.

"Oh, no, there isn't," she said quickly and looked away. It was very brief, but she got to see two new expressions on Kazama today.

He smirked. "I see."

Chizuru took this chance to turn her whole body away, since she was feeling pretty uncomfortable right now. He had not only smiled at her, but he also kissed her forehead! She absentmindedly touched the area he kissed. Of course, the action did not go unnoticed by Kazama.

"Did you enjoy it that much?"

"What? No!"

"You didn't like it?"

"It's n-not that I didn't like it or anythingâ€¦" she trailed off.

"Then which is it?"

"It's complicated!" She blurted out. \_What was with all these questions? \_

Then, Kazama did something even more bizarre: he laughed. And it

wasn't your average "hahaha bow down to me, peasant" laugh either. He suddenly raised his hand and Chizuru flinched, thinking he was going to hit her. Contrary to her thoughts, he used his hand to pat her head.

"What?"

"Idiot," he said. "You don't have to be so serious. I was only teasing you."

Chizuru stared, his words slowly sinking in. As soon as they did, she slapped his hand off. "That's not nice."

He smirked and began to speak. "Alright, that's enough playing for now. We can play all we want once you get settled in," he turned around and started walking. "Let's go."

"Where?" She tilted her head in confusion, not moving from her position.

"My house. Where else?"

"How about my stuff?"

"It's already in the car."

She turned around to realize that he was indeed correct (as always). All the boxes were already gone. "How?!"

"They were moving them to the car when you were having fun," he explained, pointing towards the limousine parked outside the condo. She stepped out of her apartment and looked down. A man in professional attire was waiting patiently with his arms crossed, leaning against the vehicle. He looked up when he realized someone was staring and waved at her. She waved back hesitantly in return. \_Okay, awkward.\_

She sighed. Well, no point in arguing now. All her belongings were already inside the limousine, so why bother? Besides, she was planning to accept sooner or later. She might as well make it sooner. Losing her will to fight, she submitted to Kazama's offer.

"Fine, I'll go, but if you regret it, you can kick me out."

"And why would I do that?" He closed and locked the door behind her and made his way down the stairs, motioning for her to follow.

"I don't know. You might decide that I take up too much space or something." Wait, stupid comeback. His "house" was too big for her to take up too much room. "Never mind. Forget what I just said."

He paused in his tracks and looked up at her, creating eye contact. "Chizuru, I promise that you are welcomed in my home anytime."

She saw reassurance in those crimson eyes of his and in that moment, she knew he would do anything to keep their promise. "Alright. I believe you."

\* \* \*

><p>"Kazama-sama, I'm not very sure about this."<p>

"You've been saying that for a while now."

"No, I really mean it this time." The vehicle they were currently riding in has just entered the gates of Kazama's "house." Staring with eyes wide in disbelief, Chizuru pressed her face up against the window to get a better view of the estate. "I'm really, really not ready."

"It's not that different from the Yukimura mansion."

"And you expect me to remember how that looked like?"

True, she's even forgotten about him. So, how would she remember her own house? Oh right, because it's her own house.

"Forgetting about me is one thing, but not having any memories of your house is just sad."

Chizuru had completely forgotten about the whole "childhood friend" thing until he brought it up just now. In fact, she's forgotten about the Shizuka thing too. Come to think of it, he still hasn't explained what he was doing with her!

"Kazama-sama! About Shiz-"

"We're here."

"Huh?" After a couple minutes of continuous driving (by the chauffeur, of course), they've finally arrived in front of the mansion. Right after the chauffeur stopped the car, a man, who was dressed in clothing a butler would wear, opened the door for Chizuru. Thanking the man, she stepped out of the limousine and admired the front yard of the mansion, which was full of all kinds of flowers.

"There's no need to thank him. He is only doing his job," Kazama's harsh tone snapped Chizuru out of her trance.

"It's because he's doing his job correctly that I should thank him," she argued, turning back to Kazama.

Kazama seemed shock for a second before he regained his composure and stared intently at the man.

"Ye-yes, Kazama-sama?" The man stumbled upon his words.

"You should be grateful that Chizuru thanked such a lowly servant like you. Thank her."

"Hu- huh? I don't think it works that way," Chizuru muttered exhaustedly. She had a feeling that Kazama had a lot to learn about critiques and manners.

"Thank you very much, Yukimura-sama!" The man bowed, causing Chizuru to stir and shake her head.

"No no, it's alright, but instead of saying 'thank you,' you should say 'you're welcome.'"



The man looked up at Chizuru, and then at Kazama, who gave a slight nod in return. Then, he faced her again.

"You're welcome, Yukimura-sama!"

"Chizuru's fine," she smiled. Having people act all formal to her was quite bothersome. She didn't like the idea of being called "Yukimura-sama." It gave her too many memories of the past. She was Chizuru now. It's not like she hates being called by her family name though. After all, she doesn't mind it when Yamazaki calls her by it. It was just the honorific "sama"; it didn't seem fitting for her anymore.

Kazama's eyes narrowed at Chizuru and he pulled her away before the man could try saying her name. "Let's go."

"Huh? Now?"

"Do you intend to freeze out here?"

"â€|It's pretty warm out."

"Be quiet."

So, she did. And she remained that way until Kazama brought her into an empty room and pushed her onto the bed.

\* \* \*

><p>Thanks for reading! Always looking forward to reading reviews!<p>

Dear **\*\*Stalianha\*\***: Haha, I'm so glad they weren't (that) OOC. I'm sorry if Kazama was OOC here (or anywhere). I try my best to keep them in character most of the time. I have around two weeks off for Christmas, but I will be out of the country. I don't know if this site works in that country, but I'm pretty sure it will. Either way, I will try to update faster during the holidays. No, no. Trust me, it's fine. ^^ Well, then again, my English isn't that good. xD Thanks for reading and reviewing! ^^

Dear **\*\*Dasom\*\***: I'm so glad you liked it! Thank you for reading and reviewing! ^^

## 15. Chapter 14

Hi! Sorry for the long wait! .

>It's really short this time as well! D;<br>I've been so busy these past few weeks, so I was running low on muse and inspiration... -.-

>I like how I'm ending each line with a face. :D<p>

\*No F4

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\* \* \*

><p>She really didn't know what to expect, but one thing's for sure: this was Kazama we were talking about here. And she knew from the way he stomped into the manor (plus the way he kicked open the door to an empty room) that he certainly wasn't very happy. About what though, she wasn't very sure.<p>

As he led her in and slammed the door behind them, Chizuru winced. \_What's he so angry about?\_ It's only been a couple of minutes since she's arrived at his mansion, but he's already upset! She hasn't done anything wrong; at least that's what she thought.

Then, he walked towards her, swiftly closing the distance between them. As a result, she stumbled backwards and if it weren't for a certain pair of strong arms, she would've fallen hard onto the carpeted floor.

"Th-thank you," she stammered. He didn't say anything, however his arms remained circled around her waist. Finding this situation awkward, she pushed lightly on his chest, hoping he would let go of her. "Umâ€|Kazama-sama?"

As though she was hit by a strong force, she was suddenly pushed backwards onto a soft surface. "Ka- Kazama-sama?" He had pushed her onto the bed! She struggled beneath him, but his grip on her shoulders was too firm. "What are you doing?!"

"Nothing much," he answered nonchalantly, his fingertips brushing against her cheek ever so gently.

\_This doesn't seem like "nothing much" to me! \_Chizuru tried desperately to find another place to look, but no matter which direction she turned her gaze to, she could still vaguely make out his expression, which bothered her a lot.

Kazama kept his eyes locked onto hers, but realizing that she wasn't looking at him, he lowered his gaze toâ€|her lips. His fingers followed suit and soon, his cold, graceful fingers were stroking her rosy lips.

She wished she could talk, but she was afraid of what would happen if she did. So instead, she kept her mouth shut and locked her lips together as hard as she could. She squeezed her eyes shut when she felt his thumb caressing her lower lip.

With her heart beating loudly in her chest, Chizuru worried about what would come next. \_He wouldn't kiss me, would he? \_

Suddenly, she heard light laughter come from above and she opened her eyes, curious to see what Kazama was laughing at. His eyes were gleaming with amusement and his lips curved into a smile as soon as she did so. He ruffled her hair with his hand and Chizuru grumbled, displeased with the fact that her hair was being messed up.

"Stop being so serious."

"Huh?"

"You're so much fun to tease, Chizuru," he smirked maliciously, his perfect teeth brimming with confidence.

"What?!" So, he was only teasing her. She didn't know why, but a part of her actually enjoyed their little interaction just now. The chill from his fingertips were long gone by now, but the sensation of his fingertips remained. She couldn't help but touch her lips, but when she noticed a pair of crimson eyes on her, she quickly rubbed her lips with her palm.

"I'm just getting rid of any bacteria from your fingers," she lied poorly, turning away.

"Oh, really?" She heard him say. From his tone, she could hear he was happy. \_He was so angry before though!\_ If Kazama was a girl, she would have just concluded that he was on his period, but since he wasn't a girl, she couldn't really say that. The image of Kazama as a woman suddenly popped into Chizuru's mind and a bubble of laughter escaped her lips.

"What's so funny?" He asked, sitting on the bed beside her.

"No- nothing!" She squeaked between fits of laughter. I mean, a Kazama dressed in a blouse and skirt was just too hilarious to imagine. Add a wig, make-up, a pair of high-heels (oh, and maybe some jewellery and make-up too) and you'll get the perfect woman!

Kazama was about to speak up when a knock sounded from the door. "What is it?" He demanded. His voice was suddenly much colder than before.

"Um the ro- room is re- ready," a polite voice was heard on the other side of the door. She didn't come in, nor did she open the door; she just stood outside and voiced her report.

"Alright. You can go now."

A quiet "yes" was heard before silence followed.

"Let's go," Kazama said all of a sudden, breaking the peaceful silence. He got up before offering a hand to Chizuru to take. She stared at the outstretched hand and wondered what she was supposed to do. He didn't expect her to need help with standing up, did he? She wasn't \_that\_ weak. She shook her head and got up herself.

"Thanks, but I'm fine," she smiled. Ignoring her words, he grabbed her wrist and led the way out. The whole time, Chizuru's heart wouldn't stop pounding as she stared down at the rough yet gentle hand on her wrist.

\* \* \*

><p><em>Well, this is rather expected. <em>The "room," that she was told would be hers to keep from now on, looked more like a ballroom. The ceiling wasn't too high up, but the room sure was huge, way bigger than the guest room she stayed at last time. There was a flat screen TV along with a couple of speakers installed into the wall. She figured it was one of those surround sound things. (She didn't have money, but she wasn't completely isolated from civilization.) Under the TV was a shelf stuffed with a DVD player, a CD player, and a couple of other things that she guessed were used for games. Off to one side, there was a door which led to the washroom. Entering it, she realized that there were two other stalls: one for the toilet and

one for the shower. There was also a Jacuzzi. Suddenly, she craved for a bath in that tub.

Exiting the bathroom now, she notices a table with a black computer and a silver laptop on it. \_Well, I'm never gonna be bored, \_she rolled her eyes. Kazama's a little bit too prepared. It wasn't like she's going to use all of this stuff! The only reason she would even go on the Internet is to do homework and she's never had trouble with that; she would just use the school's computers during lunch.

Then, she saw the bed. Well, technically, the bed was one of the first things she saw upon entering the room, but it was also the last thing she wanted to check out. She was afraid that if she did, she wouldn't be able to leave it alone. I mean, who would be able to resist the tempting velvet sheets that were laid over the bouncy-looking king sized bed? There were pillows of various sizes and shades of pink at the head of the bed and a thin curtain separated Chizuru from the bed.

Beside the bed were two bedside tables (one on each side) and on one of them, a clock rested. It currently read 5:48PM. Strange, she swore it was 5:30PM when she first came in... And why does she feeling like she's missing something?

\_Shoot! \_She had been so into admiring her new bedroom that she's completely forgotten about Kazama!

She spun around just then to check where he wasâ€¦to see that he was seated on a couch in the centre of the room. Sitting with one leg laid out across the other, he looked like a king on the stainless white couch. "Like it?"

"I love it," she said in amazement. With her eyes wide with disbelief and her lips tuned up in a smile, she almost looked like a kid.

"Good, this is your room from now on." Chizuru, still amazed by the size and luxury of her new room, stared at Kazama, who stared back in return. "Would you rather stay with me?"

"N-no!" She stammered. Smooth, Chizuru, smooth. She didn't get to explain her stuttering though, because the next second, Kazama got up and walked towards the door. "Find me if you need anything."

"Oh, you're leaving now?"

He paused and looked at her. Then, he smirked. "What? You want me to stay?"

"Th-that's not what I'm trying to say!" She was beginning to think that Kazama should leave before she says anything else she's going to regret. Fortunately, he only smirked once more before leaving the room, leaving Chizuru to debate with herself in her head.

\_What should I do first? Explore? Unpack? Greet everyone? \_It seemed obvious to her that she should greet everyone in his family first, but it'd be pretty hard to find them all, and she didn't really know who his family consisted of. Exploring would be nice, but what if she got lost? It'd be pretty hard, finding her way back, and she's already explored her room enough. Since she's living in this room,

she would slowly grow accustomed to it anyway. So, she finally settled down with some unpacking.

She found a pair of scissors on the desk and used it to cut open the tape. Folding the flaps of the box to the side, she peered in and found that all her belongings have been neatly stacked. It looked as though it was packed by a professional mover or something, if movers did any packing that is.

She took everything out bit by bit. The first box consisted of random things such as utensils, books, and photo albums. While taking everything out, she noticed some items that she hasn't seen in a while, most of which were old photo albums. She flipped through the books of collected memories and took a minute to reminisce in them. There were photos of her with her parents and a male version of her, well, a male look-alike of her. This must be Kaoru, she concluded, her index finger tracing his face ever so slightly.

She remembered him. His face, his voice, his personality; she remembered all of it. It was all clear to her now; it felt so stupid to have forgotten about him, now that she remembers him, of course. She didn't know what came over her, but as soon as that headache ended, everything cleared up.

And that dream— There was one more thing she's forgotten. There was definitely something else, but what could it be? Another sibling? No, that wouldn't make sense. She would have pictures of him/her then. She swiftly flipped through the album again, but found no signs of anyone else. The most she could find were pictures of maids, servants, chauffeurs, etc.

Then, it hit her. She looked at the cover of the album: "Yukimura Household." Written in italics was the title of the album, as well as the topic of it. No wonder, this album only had pictures of the Yukimura household and the people within it. That would explain why there aren't any photos of the Yukimura family with other families.

She checked the other albums. All of them were photos of her and her family. That was all there was.

"Why?!" She accidentally blurted out in frustration.

"Why what?"

Chizuru turned around and was met with a pair of cold eyes, much colder than Kazama's.

"What a mess! I heard you've only moved in today, yet you've already dirtied my floor," the woman with piercing eyes and an equally piercing voice said.

"Excuse me?" What did she mean by "her" floor?

"Mother!" A running Kazama sped into the room, slightly out of breath.

Mother? Chizuru turned back to the woman and stared, dumbfounded by the threatening gaze of Kazama's mother.

\* \* \*

><p>Thanks for reading! Please review! Thank you!<p>

Replies to last time's reviews:

\*As always, it's in order from the latest review to the oldest review. (Guest 1 refers to the one who reviewed under "guest" first. Guest 2 refers to the one who reviewed under "guest" second.) I apologize if I missed any.

Dear **\*\*yuzuki\*\***: I'm so glad you liked it! I will! ^^ Thank you for reading and reviewing!~

Dear **\*\*Guest2\*\***: Thanks for the compliments! I will, definitely! Thanks for reading and reviewing! ^^

Dear **\*\*LuckyLucy\*\***: Haha, well this one came out a little bit later. :( You bet, he is. Thanks for reading and reviewing! :D

Dear **\*\*Olivia\*\***: Olivia! It's been a while! ^^ Haha, it's alright! Wow, yes, you do seem very busy. :o Never mind the reviews, I'm just glad you're still following up on this story! It's alright! Don't worry about it! Haha, yes, I am very slow at updating and my chapters are short too. . I apologize! LOL! I'm so glad you were that interested in my story! xD It would be nice if Kazama was real... haha! Then, he could kiss all of us! 3 Haha, we all hate Shizuka, including me! Yeah, I will try to put more Okita in! Don't worry. :) Aw! It's alright, I don't mind spelling mistakes. I have plenty of them and none of my fingers are broken. I hope your fingers heal soon. I will try my best to update ASAP. Thanks for reading and reviewing as always!~

Dear **\*\*Guest1\*\***: Haha, this was so late, but here you go! Thanks for reading and reviewing! :)

Dear **\*\*Stalianha\*\***: Haha, you're welcome. I know you love me. :) This was so short, but I hope you enjoyed it. D: I ordered it from Amazon, but yeah. :D I'm so glad you thought so! . No no no, thank YOU for reading and reviewing! :)

## 16. Chapter 15

Hohoho! Oh, sorry, it's not Christmas yet?

Anyway, I am really impressed with the reviews. I never knew how much you guys actually liked this story.

>Like, I am speechless... but I'm typing quite a bit for someone who's speechless...<br>Overall, I would like to say a big **\*\*thank you\*\*** to all of those who are still following up on this story!

>And a even bigger thank you to all those who took your time to review! It really helps, so thanks!<p>

I am not the best writer out there, obviously, so I can't promise you a top quality fanfiction. I am writing this purely for fun.

>That's why I am so surprised and grateful that you guys are reviewing to help me make adjustments to the story.<br>Every review pushes me further and inspires me to write more!

Seriously, I can't thank you enough!

>I don't even know why you guys are still reading this. \*cries in happiness, if that makes sense\*<p>

**\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki.\*\***

\* \* \*

><p><em>Well, this is awkward.<em>

Chizuru was currently seated in the centre of her room, surrounded by the massive mess she had just made. She hadn't done it on purpose, but she had gotten so into the album laid out in front of her that she had completely forgotten to put everything away.

Kazama's mother stood in the doorway to her room, arms crossed neatly in front of her chest. Her eyes resembled spikes of ice threatening to race Chizuru's way. The woman had on a pair of shimmering black heels with a long leather jacket and her hair was done up in a bun. She looked exactly like Chizuru would have expected, except she hadn't expected the furrow in her eyebrows.

"Mother," Kazama voiced menacingly from behind said woman. However, his tone had no affect whatsoever on her.

"Where are your greetings, Yukimura?" The woman threatened, striding to her slowly.

"Oh! Umâ€¦" \_Oh, no. What do I say? \_"G- good evening, ma'am." She stood up and bowed as low as she could, avoiding the woman's cold gaze.

Ignoring her, Kazama's mother spoke, "Chikage, this girl is only here to work for us. She doesn't deserve such a fine room."

Chizuru tried not to flinch and stayed bowing in her spot. She didn't know exactly what happened next; the only thing she heard was the ushering of footsteps and the slam of a door. She finally looked up and realized that they had left.

\_What do I do? \_Kazama's mother didn't seem to like having her live here, but she hasn't even done anything to her! Perhaps Chizuru just caught his mother in a sour mood; that was probably it. She had no reason to hate her.

Shaking her head of these rigid thoughts, she began to get back to unpacking.

\* \* \*

><p>"Mother, she is not here as a maid. She is here as my fiancÃ©e."<p>

"FiancÃ©e? Oh, dear, are you still caught up on that? Do not worry, my son. I have already found another fiancÃ©e for you."

"There is no need for another fiancÃ©e. Chizuru is good enough."

"Chikage, you don't seem to understand. This is for your own good; what we need now is not a dirt poor wife, but a wealthy one. The Yukimura has fallen; you cannot change that fact. Just accept your new fiancée and let Chizuru return back to her commoner life. I'm sure that is what she would want as well."

The words entering through Sen's ears were faint due to the long distance, but she could roughly make out what they were saying. As she stood around the corner, eavesdropping on the menacing mother and son couple, she knew what she had to do next.

\* \* \*

><p>A while later, Chizuru was finally done putting all her belongings away. Suddenly, her door slammed open.<p>

"Yukimura, change into this," a maid, who had entered the room without knocking, said. She lifted up the black and white maid dress and shoved it roughly into her arms. "From now on, you're Kazama-sama's personal maid."

"Pardon?" \_I seem to have heard wrong. Did I just hear her say that I'm Kazama's pers--

"You're his personal maid, now hurry up or we'll both get in trouble!" The maid, who seemed to be too rude to be one, turned around and prepared to leave. "When you're done, go to Kazama-sama's office to start your first task." And just like that, she left, and without closing the door behind her too.

Too stunned for words, she stood for a few minutes, contemplating whether to change or not. In the end, she did. Her first impression of that maid wasn't very nice, but her second impression of her would be even worse if she had gotten her in trouble. She shuddered at the thought, closed the door, and headed towards her washroom to change.

Strangely, the outfit fitted her perfectly, sleeves and waist and all.

She twirled around a few times in front of her mirror. For a maid's dress, it sure looked adorable. It looked almost like those exaggerated Halloween maid costumes. She skipped out of her room, content from the cute outfit. Then, she stopped.

Did she even know where Kazama's office is?

Should she ask someone for directions? Or maybe use the telephone from her room, which connects to all the other rooms? Or should she just wander around until she sees his room?

Just then, a girl walked by. \_Perfect timing! I'll just ask her!

—

The girl wasn't wearing a maid costume, nor did she seem to be working at all. With her expensive kimono, she looked like the daughter of a rich family. The girl seemed to be clouded in her own thoughts as Chizuru came up to her.

"Excuse me, do you know where Kazama-sama's office is?" She asked in



what she hoped was a polite voice.

"Oh! It's you!" The girl said, surprised by the sudden encounter.

"Um...yes, it's me?" Chizuru tilted her head. She has never met this girl before, or had she? \_Don't tell me; she's one of the people who I've forgotten?\_

The girl suddenly smiled and said, "Yeah, I know where Chikage's office is. Head straight and turn right at that flower pot over there. Then, keep going until you see a large wooden door. That's his office."

Chizuru brightened up at the directions. "Oh, thank you, um..."

"Sen. Call me Sen."

Chizuru nodded. "Thank you, Sen-san!"

Sen nodded back and smiled. "No need to be so formal. It's me who should be more formal."

Chizuru was confused by what she said, but she didn't have a chance to ask as Sen turned in the other direction and walked away.

Chizuru followed Sen's directions and wasn't surprised when she found the wooden door she had talked about. \_She was so nice,\_ Chizuru thought. \_And she called Kazama "Chikage"â€¦\_

She wasn't jealous; just curious was all. Kazama didn't let many people call him by his given name. Well, he didn't seem like the type anyway. And she could tell, from the way she had recited the directions to her almost like directions to her own house, that Sen and Kazama are very close.

Maybe they're childhood friends or somethingâ€¦

Then, she remembered that she was supposedly his childhood friend too.

\_Rightâ€¦\_

Ignoring her thoughts, she knocked twice on the door before a low voice granted her permission to come in.

She entered the room and stared wide-eyed at the luxury in front of her. And she thought her room was beautiful! Kazama's office was a large room; it shared similar aspects with her school principal's office. It had a large wooden bureau in the centre with long windows in the back. There were two couches in front of the huge desk, accompanied by a wide tea table. Tall plants decorated the sides of the windows and glass displays of all sorts of things lined up the walls of the room.

Kazama wasn't hard to spy, but she chose to ignore him and went for the room instead. "Wow! This is such a nice office!"

"Would you prefer to sleep in here instead?"

She laughed lightly; Kazama realized that she hadn't done that in a while. "No, I like my room a lot too!"

"That's good," she heard him smile through his tone and couldn't resist turning around and having a glimpse of him. Unfortunately, he had already returned to his previous indifferent expression. "That dress looks nice on you."

She unconsciously looked down at the dress. "Really?" She couldn't tell if he was complimenting her or insulting her. It wasn't necessarily a good thing to look good in peasant clothing, but this maid dress was so beautiful that it couldn't be compared to servant attire.

"I got a different design for you, since you're my private maid."

"Is this another way of teasing me? 'Cause if it is, you've totally won."

"I'm sorry," his face was suddenly solemn. "I didn't know what else to do."

"What do you mean?" She tilted her head in confusion.

"I'm sure you're aware of it already. My mother doesn't agree with my ways."

"What does that have to do with anything?"

"The only way for you to stay here is to be a maid," he paused and looked at Chizuru who remained silent, urging him to continue. He sighed once before speaking again. "I disagreed and she said she would kick you out. I would rather have you work for me than work for the whole familyâ€|"

"â€|So you made me your personal maid," she finished for Kazama. He didn't reply, but he looked at her with an expression that confirmed what she said.

"Okay. I don't mind doing this," she said after a minute of debating. Kazama's eyes widened a bit before relaxing again.

"And why is that?"

"You provided me with somewhere to live, so why shouldn't I do something back? Truthfully, it is unfair of me to live here without giving anything back. This is the perfect opportunity!"

Kazama seemed to doubt it for a bit, but examining Chizuru's determined expression, he gave up with a sigh. "Fine, but if you regret it, don't hesitate to tell me."

She nodded. Being Kazama's personal maidâ€| that sounded troublesome, but what could she do about it? Kazama was being nice to her, so she had to return the favour.

For the remainder of the day, she busied herself with various, simple tasks he assigned to her.

\* \* \*

><p>Brewing tea, pouring tea, and sitting around, that was really all she had done yesterday. Yet, for some reason, she had been really tired and refused to wake up the next morning. That is, until her door opened with a loud smash at 6:30 in the morning.<p>

"Yukimura! Wake up!" A rough voice snapped Chizuru awake from slumber.

"Wh- wha?" Chizuru murmured dozily. She rubbed her eyes and waited for her vision to clear up and when it did, she saw the maid who had given the dress to her yesterday. "Oh, good morning," she greeted.

"Don't 'good morning' me! It's way past 6! You're supposed to wake Kazama-sama up at 7:00!" The loud maid hurried her out of bed and shoved her towards the closet, which for some reason, had been filled with dozens of different designs of maid attire. "You're lucky enough to have more than 2 designs of clothes to change into, so make good use of them and change into them already!"

"Yes, ma'am!" Chizuru answered diligently, marching towards her closet to pick out a random outfit for the day. Normal maids don't get this kind of authority, so she was definitely very lucky.

"Don't call me that; call me Rin," the woman finally quieted down, albeit only slightly, and proceeded to walk away after making sure Chizuru was all ready to work. "You have school later, so make sure to finish all of your tasks before heading out."

"Yes ma- Rin-san!" Chizuru yelled from the bathroom.

Although Chizuru couldn't see it, Rin smirked, a sign that indicated that she had acknowledged her.

\* \* \*

><p>"Kazama-sama, it's time to wake up!" Chizuru slipped into Kazama's room, which he had given her directions to yesterday, upon receiving no response after knocking. Laid between the king sized bed and pure white sheets was Kazama, breathing steadily with his eyes laid gently shut.<p>

\_He's still asleep, but I have to wake him up or else I'll get in trouble! \_Chizuru reasoned.

"Kazama-sama?" She moved to the side of his bed. "Kazama-sama?"

No response came and no movement, not even a flinch, was seen from the man.

"Kazama-sama?"

She grew impatient and excused herself before boldly rocking his shoulders. "KAZAMA-SAMA!"

He still hadn't moved. Okay, he must have woken up from that. He didn't seem to be the heavy sleeper type either.

Was he toying with her again? So early in the morning? She sighed and suddenly remembered something. She could just call him by his first name! If he's really just teasing her, he would wake up from the sound of her calling him by his name. She was certain of this.

"Chikage."

Contrary to her prediction, Kazama still didn't wake up. By now, Chizuru wanted to flip the whole bed upside down, but she realized that she probably wasn't strong enough.

She sat on the bed with her back facing the body behind her, not knowing what to do.

Suddenly, an arm grabbed her and dragged her backwards. "Wha-"

Just like the first day, she found herself pinned to the bed by Kazama.

"Shh," he hushed. "Just a little moreâ€¦"

He leaned in andâ€¦

\* \* \*

><p>Thanks for reading! Please review! ^^<p>

Replies:

Dear \*\*LuckyLucy\*\*: LOL The worst cliff hangers as in it makes you excited or it's boring? XD Soon, soon, very soon. :) Thank you for understanding, reading and reviewing as always!~

Dear\*\* Stalianha\*\*: Haha! I'm glad you enjoyed it! I'm sorry it was so short though. :( Thank you so much for understanding! Your last few sentences were so inspiring, I think I'm gonna cry. xD Thank you for reading and reviewing as usual!~

Dear\*\* aizawa saki\*\*: LOL I like that prediction, but no, Kazama doesn't have a sister in my fanfiction. ;) Thanks for reading and reviewing as always!~

## 17. Chapter 16

Sorry for the late update!

>It's super short this time! D; Sorry, I've been so busy lately since Winter Break's coming up.<p>

Anyway, here's the next chapter!

\*\*Disclaimer: I don't own Hakuouki.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>He leaned in andâ€¦<p>

"Wait, wait, wait!" Chizuru shoved her hands in front of her,

preventing Kazama from getting any closer to her. She felt his lips scowl against her palm before a hand much larger than hers grabbed her wrists, forcing them down against the bed.

"Wh-wha?" Chizuru panicked. "What are y- you doing?"

She struggled, but could only lie still as his face came down upon hers. As if everything was happening in slow motion, his lips met hers slowly.

Her mind was blank and she found herself holding her breath. Her eyes wide, she continued to stare at the face in front of her. Even as their lips parted, Chizuru's mind continued to blank out. Kazama gazed down at her and suddenly, Chizuru caught sight of his lips.

Those lips that she has always admiredâ€¦ had just kissed her! She felt her cheeks heat up rapidly and she scrambled for the right words. "Ka- kaza- k-k-k-k-kis-kisâ€¦"

Kazama smirked victoriously and lowered his body again. This time, Chizuru was ready. She began to shield her lips with her hands, but realized that Kazama wasn't trying to kiss her again. Instead, he had laid his head on her stomach, his eyes laid shut. After a minute of staring, Chizuru wondered if he had fallen asleep. "Ka- Kazama-sama?" She immediately felt him flinch.

"Was that kiss not enough to keep you quiet? Or perhaps," he opened his razor sharp eyes and gazed at Chizuru, "you want more?"

Chizuru looked down at the man lying on top of her, her mind barely registering what he had just said. The way Kazama looked right now, head lying on her and all, made Chizuru fluster. Her heart was beating loudly and she swore he could hear it.

Since she didn't respond, Kazama became curious. \_So, she \_does \_want more? \_He smirked, lifted his head, and began to crawl up, placing his hands on the bed around Chizuru for support. He was about to lean in for another round, when Chizuru spoke up.

"...heavyâ€¦"

"What?"

"You'reâ€¦heavy. Get offâ€¦" Chizuru looked to the side, blushing wildly. Her hands rested on his chest in an attempt to push him away.

His eyes were wide in disbelief for a second before he smirked in amusement. Chizuru never ceases to amuse him. Her tiny hands applying a weak amount of pressure to his chest, her cheeks blushing, her whole body trembling, she was absolutely adorable. He grabbed hold of her hands, to which Chizuru jumped at, and swung to the side.

"I got it. I have to get up, right?"

"Umâ€¦yes." She had completely forgotten about the whole reason she came to him so early in the morning. She looked away again, checking the time while she was at it. "Oh no! It's already this late!"

Then, to Kazama's utter surprise, she shoved him away with more force than before.

"Please get ready, Kazama-sama!" She practically ordered.

She, his personal maid, was ordering him! Kazama's eyes didn't leave her form as she began to walk out of the room.

"Your breakfast is being prepared, so please come down when you are ready! And you will be ready." She added the last part, giving the man a hard look. Then, she spun on her toe and stalked away.

She heard Kazama chuckle quietly before the door closed completely behind her.

\* \* \*

><p>While the main family was to dine in the huge dining room, the maids and workers of the household were to eat in the kitchen. They weren't fed peasant food, oh no. In fact, they were fed what the main family was being fed, just on a smaller scale. In other words, they would have the leftovers. The chefs always make more food than necessary; some would even think that they do this on purpose, so they could feed all the other workers. Well, no one's complaining, so who cares?<p>

As a result of the different breakfast routines, she didn't get a chance to see Kazama again until she was about to depart for school. She had just changed into her uniform and was about to grab her bag when a knock sounded at her door. She turned her head to see Kazama coming in without her approval. What can she say? At least he knocked.

"Let's go," he said simply.

Right. Since they were living together now, there was no point in going to school separately. She nodded slowly and proceeded to grab her bag, but before she could swing it over her shoulder, everything in the bag fell out. She had been holding her bag upside down.

She bent forward, beginning to pick up all her papers and utensils. Consequently, Kazama began to walk over and help her out. Then, he noticed something in the midst of all her sheets of school work. He picked it up and held it in front of him.

"What's this?" As if he was drawn to the antique looking booklet, he peered into it and examined each page. It was a photo album.

"Oh, that? I was unpacking yesterday. I must have misplaced it by accident," she explained. "I'll put it somewhere else. Here, give it to me." She held her hand out expectantly, but Kazama didn't even budge as he stopped on one page.

"Do you remember him?" He suddenly asked.

Somehow, Chizuru didn't need to ask who to figure out who he was talking about.

"Yeah, sort of, I guess. It just came to me all of a sudden," she

looked down, fidgeting with her fingers. He was talking about Kaoru, her twin brother. Truthfully, she was embarrassed. How could she have forgotten about someone so important? And this man in front of her, had she somehow forgotten about him too?

"Iâ€|" Kazama paused. Chizuru looked up at him, urging him to continue, and so he did. "I look forward to the day when you'll recall all your memories, especially those of me."

Then, she smiled. She didn't know why she had done that, and she would probably smack herself later for it, but right now, she couldn't conceal her relief. He had given her more time to remember, as well as an opportunity.

\* \* \*

><p>Kazama had an idea, but it was a very controversial idea. If seeing the picture of Kaoru had given her some memories back, then maybe the key to her remembering him was simply to show her a picture of the two of them when they were young. On the other hand, she could suffer again, from headaches and whatnot. There was always the chance that she would remember naturally as she stayed in his mansion. Perhaps he could bring her to places where she used to play a lot at.<p>

Kazama's head was filled with "maybes" and "perhaps" all the way to school. Chizuru sat beside him in the limousine, admiring the view outside, because there really was nothing else to do. Kazama wasn't talking and he looked like he was doing some intense thinking, so she really didn't want to bother him. She didn't want to know what would happen to her if she had.

They got to the school and the limo dropped the two of them off at the gate. "Have a nice day," the chauffeur spoke formally to Chizuru as he held the door open for her. She stepped out and thanked the kind man before catching up with Kazama, who was still caught up in his thoughts. So, instead of engaging in what would be a stupid conversation with him, she looked forward. That was when she saw her.

Shizuka.

The girl was approaching them casually. Chizuru mentally prepared herself for what was to come, which in all honesty, she had no idea what was going to happen.

As the girl came near the two, Chizuru waved and smiled. "Good morning!" She greeted.

Shizuka smiled gently, to her relief, but did nothing else. She might as well have ignored her though, for the next moment, she was all over Kazama, wrapping her skinny arms around his torso.

"Good morning, Kazama-sama!" Her cheery voice greeted the man, who ignored her in return. He continued to walk forward, not noticing the extra weight on him or the fact that Chizuru had disappeared.

\* \* \*

><p>All reviews are appreciated! Thanks for reading! :D<p>

Responses to last time's reviews (Sorry if I missed any):

Dear\*\* LuckyLucy\*\*: Haha, I'm glad my cliffhangers actually do their jobs. xD Thanks for reading and reviewing!

Dear \*\*Stalianha\*\*: Thank YOU for reading! I tried to add the oneshot into it, but I didn't want to copy it exactly. Plus, as I kept writing, the story line changed a bit . I'm glad you thought that he was cute! Not many people are able to think so xD he's either hot or sexy. Cute's a new one. ^^ See you soon! Thanks for reviewing!

## 18. Chapter 17

How long has it been? :o

I sincerely apologize for the late update! .

Good news though! Winter break's coming up, which means sitting in front of the computer everyday! :D (+a little bit of homework, but meh!)

>I'll have time to update!<p>

\*\*Disclaimer: I don't own Hakuouki.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Chizuru walked briskly down the busy halls of her school. She hadn't realized that she had been walking in the wrong direction until the bell rung, snapping her out of her thoughts. She muttered something inaudible under her breath before dashing in the opposite direction, towards her classroom.<p>

By the time she finally reached her first period class, she was out of breath. Panting heavily, she slid open the door. She hunched over, partly because she was out of breath and partly because she was about to apologize.

"I'm so sorry I'm late!" Her head was kept low and she didn't move from her position until someone dismissed her from it.

"Don't worry about it," her homeroom teacher, Harada-sensei, said, stepping down from the platform and walking over to her. She felt a gentle hand place itself over her shoulder and she looked up. "Talk to me after class. And you're not in trouble, don't worry."

She nodded and awkwardly headed over to her seat. After taking attendance, class began. The lesson went along smoothly until a knock sounded from the door. Harada-sensei granted entry to whoever was outside and gasps were heard around the class as the door opened. Chizuru, on the other hand, sighed. How totally expected; it was Kazama.

"Oh, yes, Kazama-san. Is there something you need?" Harada-sensei spoke smoothly, unaffected by Kazama's presence.

"Can I borrow Chizuru for a while?" His eyes loomed over her form briefly before darting back to Harada-sensei.



"For how long?"

"Depends on how cooperative she is."

The two stared, or glared (if you looked closely), at each other before her teacher began to speak again. "We are currently learning new material, so it is important that Yukimura-san stays in class."

Chizuru watched as the two stared/glared at each other again. Then, finally, after what seemed like hours, Kazama nodded. "Fine. Chizuru," he called out to her. "Meet me in the office at lunch."

She nodded back slowly, fully aware of the strange looks her classmates were giving her. Some were envious looks while others seemed excitedâ€¦ weird.

She turned her full attention back to the lesson as soon as Kazama left, but she couldn't help but notice how Harada-sensei's gaze would often linger on her longer than necessary. Several times, she thought he would pick on her to answer the question, but every time, her prediction would be inaccurate. She found herself sighing whenever he chose someone else to answer. Sure, she was a pretty smart kid (to be able to get into this school with a scholarship, you must be one intelligent kid), but she wasn't always certain if her answers were correct or not. Still, Harada-sensei's constant gaze directed in her direction made her wonder just what he wanted to talk to her about after class.

As soon as the bell rang, students rapidly poured out of the classroom. Only Chizuru and Harada-sensei were left and he motioned for her to come to his desk. He sat down on the table, facing Chizuru. His expression was serious as he spoke.

"So, you're living with Kazama now?"

The question came as a surprise to her and she nodded hesitantly. It wasn't a bad thing if people found out, right?

"Alright, I need to confirm your new address and phone number with you."

"Oh, I don't really know-"

"Got it, I'll talk to Kazama then."

There was silence as he took down some notes in his binder.

"Umâ€¦ is there anything else you-"

"Chizuru."

She shivered at the sound of her name being spoken so intimately. He hadn't used any honorifics, nor had he used her family name. "Um, yes?"

"Are you sure about this?" His eyes remained focused on hers as she struggled to keep eye contact with him.

"About what?"

"You're living with Kazama; are you really sure you want to do this?"

She looked at him with confusion. Kazama had offered her a place to stay, and he seemed like a really nice guy. Sure, she was sure.

"Umâ€¦yes?"

They looked at each other for a while, both staying quiet. Then, Harada-sensei smiled. "You can go now. Tell your next period teacher that I had to pull you back for a bit."

She nodded again before stepping out, wondering what in the world had just happened.

\* \* \*

><p>"Chizuru! What did Harada-sensei talk to you about?" A sweaty, but not in a disgusting way, Heisuke hopped into place beside her. She shrugged.<p>

"Oh, you know. Just about my address and stuff." She made sure to be as brief as possible. Heisuke took it in a different way though.

"Wait, what?! Is he trying to pay you a visit?"

She shook her head quickly before any misunderstandings could come up. "No, no, no! Justâ€¦ you know, there were some errors when I registered, so they had to fix it," she lied. Hopefully, it wasn't too obvious; she was never a good liar to begin with.

"Oh, I see." He believed her. This idiot! He believed her! Now she felt extra guilty!

"Yeahâ€¦" She mentally face-palmed before turning back to him. "So, I probably won't be able to eat with you guys today. You heard the president earlier."

She saw his right eye twitch slightly before responding. "Oh, yeah, okay."

\* \* \*

><p>Lunch time came a little too quickly for Chizuru and she found herself dragging her feet in small steps towards the student council office. She didn't want to see Kazama one-on-one right now, especially since she saw how Shizuka was clinging onto him earlier in the morning. None the less, an order from the president was the same as an order from her master, since she was working for him now. She mustn't forget that she was merely his private maid.<p>

She opened the door after knocking and receiving no response. She has grown accustomed to the way he expected her to come in without knocking, but that doesn't mean she should just come in without doing so.

Stepping through the doorway, she was suddenly reminded of the last time she came in without being granted entry. She had witnessedâ€¦ an

interesting scenario that included Shizuka and Kazama. She didn't want to see that ever again. Luckily for her, the only thing she was welcomed by was an empty room.

"Kazama-sama?" No answer. "Chikage?" Again, there was only silence.

She pouted. \_And I even thought that calling him by his given name would make him magically appear in front of me.\_ How childish of her to have thought so.

Then, to her utter surprise, a voice was heard from the doorway.

"Oh, you're early today."

She spun around, facing the man who she knew to be Kazama from just his voice. "I'm not early." \_In fact, I took even longer to come today.\_ She remembered how the whole way here, she had been dragging her feet and extending the walk as long as possible. "You're the one that's late."

He seemed to smirk a bit. "I had something to take care of."

"Like what?" She clamped her mouth shut as soon as she saw the look he gave her. It wasn't a glare, no, it was only his usual indifferent expression. However, it seemed to hold more meaning behind it; it was as though he was telling her to mind her own business. "Never mind," she squeaked.

"I have some work for you today," Kazama said all of a sudden, directing their conversation into a whole different path. "It involves organizing some documents and the like."

"Oh, okay," she said, adding in a smile so she seemed eager about the work. This might be the first time he's asked her to do something for the council. Usually, he would have divided the work between Amagiri and Shiranui, or he would've done all of it by himself. Either he was too busy right now, or he suddenly had a big amount of trust in her. She was about to ask him about where the documents were when he spoke again.

"Aren't you curious?"

She tilted her head and looked up at him. "At what?"

"My relationship with that girl." He seemed to be amused as he replied.

"Oh, um..." \_Does he mean Shizuka?\_

"Aren't you even the least bit worried?" His tone lowered and his expression was now serious. She shivered.

"Well, should I be?"

"Don't answer my question with another one. Tell me the truth."

Chizuru remained silent, pondering over what to say. She rubbed her

sweaty palms together nervously as she went over her choices. If she replied honestly, he would surely make fun of her. And if she lied, he would probably be able to tell. She unconsciously lowered her head and squeezed her eyes shut.

Then, she felt a finger tilt her chin up and she was met by Kazama's silent gaze. Suddenly, all reasoning was erased and she spoke the first word that swam up to the top of her head. "Yes."

She regretted it right after, but instead of the smirk she expected to see on his perfect face, his expression remained stoic. If anything, he looked thoughtful and worried, as if he was thinking about what to say next.

"Oh, I'm s-sorry!" A high pitch female voice rang throughout the room. Chizuru could only turn her head slightly towards the source of the voice, since Kazama's light touch was keeping her in place, while Kazama's head stayed still, eyes darting towards the doorway. It was Shizuka.

"Shizu-" Chizuru was cut off as Kazama took Chizuru by the arm and led her into one of the few inner rooms in the office.

"Stay here," Kazama ordered. She nodded obediently and watched as he exited, closing the door behind him. She sat in one of the armchairs, eyes wandering towards the wooden door from time to time. \_What in the world are they doing out there? \_She couldn't help but wonder. \_What if they're doing&#160; those kinds of things again?\_ Her mind quickly registered all the things the two could be doing together, and&#160; she panicked.

If it weren't for his stern order for her to stay in the room, she would have rushed out the door the minute he put her in the room. She couldn't stand the thought of leaving Kazama and Shizuka together. There was an endless possibility of things they could be doing and Chizuru didn't want to risk anything. Though, she didn't know whether this was her "student council member" side talking or her "I think Kazama's pretty hot" side talking. Who knows? It could be both.

Slowly, she made her way towards the door and put her ear against it, struggling to catch any sounds through the wooden barrier. She was surprised when she \_did \_manage to hear something. Talking&#160; first a girl's, then a guy's. They were having a conversation. Relieved that she didn't hear anything inappropriate, she continued listening, or eavesdropping as others may call it.

Shizuka's voice seemed to rise in volume a bit before it dropped again. The whole time, Kazama's voice remained stable. \_What were they talking about? \_She was so impatient right now!

Then, a door slammed and footsteps were heard coming towards her. She quickly sat back down on the armchair and turned away, just as the door to the inner room opened. She tried to look as though she had been whistling for a while, but the only sound she managed to make was the sound of air being blown from her mouth. She looked up at Kazama with what she hoped was a bored expression. Kazama seemed to question her failed whistling before motioning for her to follow. She was more than happy to do so.

However, as she fell in place beside him, walking over to the endless shelves of books in one corner of the room, a mixture of curiosity and awkwardness stirred up. She really wanted to ask him about Shizuka, but how would she bring it up? He was the one who had brought it up, but then the girl herself just had to show up at the right, or wrong, time. Sighing, she let herself do the talking.

"About beforeâ€|" She looked up to see Kazama looking forward and for a second, she wondered if he even heard her, but she continued anyway. "What's going on between you two?"

He didn't respond and she smacked herself for bringing it up. Her timing was never very good to begin with.

"Nothing much."

Chizuru looked up, eyes wide. She had a sudden urge to snap at the man, so she did just that.

"Look, Chikage." Her sudden use of his first name caught his attention and he couldn't help but stop in his tracks and stare at her. "I don't know about you, but making out in the student council office, linking arms like you guys are happily married, and keeping your conversations private, is totally making me wonder if this really is 'nothing much.'"

His eyes widened, just slightly, at her outburst before he smiled.

"What are you smiling about? Think this is funny?" She was practically huffing and panting by the time she was done her argument. It was a rare sight to see Yukimura Chizuru so angry, but when you do, it feels as though you've been lectured for something.

As though she had been possessed earlier, she suddenly paused and a horrified expression crawled onto her face. "I m-meanâ€|" She stuttered.

Out of nowhere, a pair of arms wrapped themselves around her. She looked up, but found herself immobile and tucked underneath Kazama's chin. She tried her best to ignore the steady heartbeat in his chest and the warmth emitting from his body. It was so comfortable that she could practically fall asleep right in his arms. The way he held onto her stirred butterflies in her stomach, and the slight pressure he was applying on her shoulders as he hugged her made her feel important.

Instinctively, she called out his name. "Kazama-sama?" However, her voice was muffled by his uniform.

"Whenever you got mad when you were young, you would confront me like you did just now." She could hear him smile as he explained. She ignored it; if she took into consideration all of the emotions he was currently expressing, she would lose the will in her to fight back.

"You still haven't told me about Shizuka," she said with a monotonous voice, or at least she tried to. It couldn't be helped if she sounded

weak. Kazama merely chuckled.

"It's nothing you need to worry about."

She couldn't talk like this. Her hands slowly made their way between them and she pushed gently. He let her push him away, although his grip remained wrapped around her. She looked up, trying to convince him with her eyes. "But I \_am \_worrying."

She continued to stare into the pair of lovely crimson hues as they stared right back. At that moment, Kazama Chikage lost to Chizuru's adorable puppy dog eyes, and he sighed. "It was a trade. I give her one thing she wants and she leaves us alone."

â€¦\_Thought it'd be something like thatâ€¦\_ Chizuru sighed in relief. It was reassuring, knowing that Kazama wasn't interested in Shizuka in that way. \_Hold on a second...why should I be relieved? \_She suddenly tensed up at the thought. \_That's it, Chizuru! You're out of your mind! You couldn't possibly be in love with this guy!

—

However, no matter what she told herself, deep inside, she knew that she had already fallen in love with him a long time ago. Perhaps, even farther back than she could remember.

\* \* \*

><p>Thanks for reading! Please review! ^^<p>

Responses:

Dear \*\*Stalianha\*\*: Haha, I hate Shizuka too, don't worry. It's not just you. Mrs. Kazama will probably be staying with Chizuru for a while. ;) Further information on Sen will be coming soon too. Next chapter will be longer. ^^ Thank you for reading and reviewing!

Dear \*\*ngiao\*\*: Thank you! I'm so glad! Thanks for reading and reviewing!

Dear\*\* aizawa saki\*\*: There will be more chikagexchizuru moments as the story progresses. ^^ Haha, sorry! . I'm so slow at updating. D; I'm hoping that the break will give me some time to mass update before exams in late January. Thanks for reading and reviewing!

## 19. Chapter 18

The return of the long chapters!

...

...

...

Anyway, I'm back! It's winter holidays, and I'm procrastinating! Yippee! Well, that means I have more time to work on this story. :D

>I'm actually on vacation right now. So, it's kind of hard to do

homework in another country... but I have no trouble writing fanfictions in another country. xD That is my excuse if I don't turn in my assignments on time. Forgive me, teachers! HEY, WAIT, WHY DO WE GET HOMEWORK OVER THE WINTER BREAK? IT'S A BREAK. WE'RE SUPPOSED TO HAVE A BREAK, HAVE A KIT KAT.<p>

Okay, putting my venting aside, I'm back with the next chapter! It's longer this time too, for all those people who miss my long chapters! ;)

\*Yes F4

>\*I feel like I'm favouring Yamazaki over the rest in this chapter. No wait, scratch that, I<strong> know<strong> I am.

\*\*Disclaimer: Do I need to do this every time? I don't know, but just in case, I don't own Hakuouki\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><em>She opened her eyes to find herself running, but what- no, who was she running towards?<em>

\_ "Chika-chan!" \_

"\_Chika-chan" turned around and she took in his appearance. The younger version of her hugged the young boy as the older version of her continued to examine him. "You're here!" \_

\_The young boy with golden hair nodded and smiled, his bright crimson eyes gleaming. "I'm staying for the night." \_

\_She felt herself smile and jump in joy. "Yay! That means we can play cards all night!" \_

\_Her mother suddenly appeared behind her. "No, you're not. You kids have to sleep." Chizuru let out a slow "aww" before turning to him.

\_

"\_Whatever, we still have lots of time to play right now. Come on, Chika-chan! Let's go play!" She started skipping towards her room with the boy walking calmly a short distance away. \_

"\_Your mother's away again?" Chizuru's mother speculated. The boy nodded silently. "So, I'm guessing she doesn't know you're here." He nodded again. \_

\_The whole time, Chizuru listened in on their short conversation, occasionally glancing back to see what his answer would be. She didn't know what they were talking about, but she knew better than to interfere.\_

\* \* \*

><p>She woke up with a strange feeling, and the first thing she thought of was her dream.<p>

Everything made sense, but at the same time, nothing made sense. The Chika-chan in her dream was without a doubt Kazama. She could recognize those bloody hues and that dirty golden shade of hair anywhere.

On the other hand, she had no idea what her mother was talking about. She remembered each detail of the dream so thoroughly yet she hadn't gotten the big picture of it. One thing was for sure now: Kazama was definitely her childhood friend. That would explain why Kazama felt so familiar to her the "first time" they met.

There was a knock at the door, and she was about to say "come in" when the person decided to barge in. Defeats the purpose of knocking, huh. Then, she realized that she's done the same thing before, when she barged in on Kazama and Shizuka. \_Does that make me a hypocrite?\_ She sighed, ridding herself of the thought of the two people she didn't want to think about right now, and faced her guest.

Smiling, "oh, good morning, Rin-san."

"Don't 'good morning' me! Look at the time!"

She did so and was more than shocked to see that it was already half past 6. She yelped and leaped out of bed, yelling out a "thank you" to Rin for waking her up (again) before racing past her. She readied herself before presenting herself in front of Kazama's bedroom. She knocked once. Twice. Thrice.

Then, she did what any sane person would do: she barged in. \_Yeah, I'm a hypocrite alright.\_ She chuckles to herself at this and strides her way towards his bed. "Kazama-sama! Time to wake up!"

His eyes snap open. "Well, that was eas-" And they close again. Raging on the inside, she stomped over to the window, making as much noise as possible while she was at it, and opened the blinds. Sunlight poured into the room and the sleeping male stirred, turning away from the window. "Chikage!"

Suddenly, he got up, turned to face Chizuru, and smirked. Soundlessly, he stood up and walked towards the bathroom, leaving a clueless Chizuru standing. \_What just happened? Well, at least he woke up.\_ She shrugged and walked out of the room, closing the door behind her.

\* \* \*

><p>"ru!...zuru!Chizuru!" She spun around and nearly crashed into Heisuke. "Finally! Do you know how long I've been calling out to you?"<p>

"Umsorry, I was spacing out." She smiled apologetically.

"It's fine, but you really shouldn't be spacing out like that in the middle of the hallway."

\_Well, I'm not exactly in the middle of the hallway. It's more like a quarter of the hallway if you're counting from the window.\_ She shook her head and smiled at him gratefully. "Thanks."

"Ah, yeah. Anytime." She noticed him blush slightly, but she shrugged it off and followed Heisuke to class.

"Chizuru, talk to me after class," Harada-sensei said as she walked in. She nodded, but thought \_not again\_ in her head. What does he



want to speak to her about this time? She sighed and walked to her desk. Was she actually in trouble this time?

Class went on as usual with roll call, Harada-sensei's lecture, and finally, a time to ask questions. For some reason, the girls in the class loved this session the most.

"Harada-sensei! I don't get this question!"

"Harada-sensei! Please tutor me!"

"Please teach me how to do this question!"

Plain old, plain old.

"Harada-sensei, why do you always talk to Yukimura-san, but when it's us, you don't care?"

Her eyes went wide and her breath hitched in her throat. What was that girl talking about?

"Kanna-chan, you're exaggerating. It's not like he doesn't talk to us," a student nearby cooed.

"I may be exaggerating, but the truth isn't far from what I said. After all, Harada-sensei does favour Yukimura-san over us."

It's been a while since this kind of thing has happened. Chizuru's been having such an amazing time at school lately that she seems to have forgotten how not everyone can put up with everyone, and that there are certainly a number of people out there who don't like her. She didn't know how she could have forgotten that, but now that she realizes it, it kind of hurts.

Before she could even cover her mouth and stop herself from saying anything stupid, Chizuru spoke. "The only reason Harada-sensei keeps asking me to talk to him after class these days has nothing to do with what you're thinking. I have no ulterior motive and neither does he." Her fingers were fastened into a grip and she shook, unaware of how her teacher was observing her from a distance away.

"Then what do you guys talk about?" The girl, Kanna, talked back.

"Nothing of your concern."

Kanna glared at her, and Chizuru fought her hardest to keep eye contact with her.

"That's enough," Harada-sensei's voice broke the two out of their staring contest. "Nagakura Kanna-san, are you trying to imply something?" His usual voice was replaced with a threatening one, a voice that Chizuru had no idea her teacher could make.

"N- no, sensei," Kanna stuttered.

Hold on Nagakura? As in Nagakura Shinpachi?

"You may be Nagakura-sensei's younger sister, but-

"Really?!" Chizuru suddenly turned towards Kanna, cutting Harada-sensei off.

"A-ah, yeah." Kanna herself looked shocked by Chizuru's sudden outburst and Harada-sensei sighed.

"Chizuru, this is not the time for-"

"That's so cool! So, do you guys talk at all during school time? Do you guys go and leave school together? Do you hang out by the gym at lunch? You know, since he's a gym teacher," Chizuru babbled.

Kanna remained speechless as Chizuru went on and on with her questions, and eventually, she giggled. "Haha! Yukimura-san! You're asking too many questions; I don't even know where to start."

Chizuru hadn't planned anything, however it seemed to her that Kanna was beginning to like her. Smiling, she walked over to Kanna's desk, just to make their conversation a little bit less awkward, since they were practically yelling across the classroom at one another. "Why don't you tell me about how close you guys are?" She wanted to know how siblings acted towards one another, since she had one too. Maybe one day, she'll find Kaoru, and when that day comes, she'll be able to act like they're siblings with no difficulty at all. She could learn from this girl!

"Chizuru, Nagakura-san, we're sort of in class right now," Harada-sensei's form loomed over the two talkative girls. Chizuru shivered and apologized before taking a seat, winking at Kanna and urging her to tell her all about her and her older brother after. Kanna was more than happy to do so.

Class went on as usual, but today felt lighter for Chizuru. Maybe it was because she made a new friend. Maybe it was because she overcame an obstacle.

As soon as the bell rang, Shizuka came over, and suddenly, the fluffy feeling disappeared.

"Yes, what is it Shizuka-chan?" Trying to keep her voice neutral, if not excited, she watched as Shizuka visibly flinched.

"You're not mad?" Her voice was nothing more than a whisper and she had to strain her ears to hear.

"At what?" Chizuru asked, but inside, she fully knew what she was talking about.

"Kazama-sama and Iâ€¦"

"No, not rea-"

"It's nothing, really! I can promise you!"

"Like I said, I'm no-"

"We didn't do anything else! It's all over now too!"

Chizuru sighed. "Listen to me. I'm not ma-"

"He doesn't even like me! I only asked him toâ€¦"

At that, she snapped. "â€¦To what? Satisfy your needs?" Chizuru sounded awfully jealous and she hated that. She quickly corrected herself. "What I mean is, this whole thing is of the past. There's no meaning in talking about it now." She was about to grab her bag and go meet Harada-sensei, who was waiting patiently and curiously by his desk.

"No! Well, yes, but, no! Well, you know what I mean! I just wanted something to remember him byâ€¦" Shizuka trailed off, mumbling some incoherent words. Her eyes struggled to find a point to look at, but they would always come back to meet Chizuru's for a short moment to see if she was still paying attention.

"Okay, I can ask Kazama himself if you don't want to talk about it." She started walking away, but turned back and added, "and don't worry. I'm not mad at you. I have no reason to be." And that was the truth. In all honesty, she had nothing against Shizuka. It wasn't as though Kazama was her boyfriend, so she had no right to say what Shizuka did was wrong. Her feelings for Kazama didn't count, because he hadn't accepted them. Well, more like she hadn't even told him about it.

She turned back to look at Shizuka one last time, but she was already gone. Heaving a sigh, she went over to Harada-sensei. One eyebrow was lifted and he looked at her curiously.

"What was that all about?"

"None of your business, no offense." She didn't feel like going over everything that just happened. She had forgiven Shizuka, but while her words said one thing, her heart said another. She hated this regretful feeling. It made her feel as though she was beginning to turn "bad," like one of those girlfriends who held grudges towards their boyfriend's previous girlfriend or something.

"None taken. Anyway, today I want to give you an update on your student profile. I've confirmed the information with Kazama, so your address is listed as Kazama's address."

She nodded in understanding and waited for him to speak again.

"I asked you if you were sure about living with him yesterday, and you said you were." She nodded again, just to show that she was paying attention. "I want to ask you that again today. Living with him, you don't know what kind of things you're going to have to put up with."

She tilted her head. "Like what? Being his personal maid?"

He shook his head and sighed. "No, not those kinds of- wait, did he make you his personal maid?"

She remembered how his mother had this whole "she doesn't deserve this" speech. "Long story short, yeah."

"What do you mean by 'long story short'?"

"If I explained, it would defeat the purpose of saying 'long story short'."

Her teacher thought for a moment, putting her comment into consideration. "True. Well, it's not Kazama I'm worried about here. It's his familyâ€|his mother to be exact."

"His mother?" She recalled how frightening and strict she was, and how much power she had over Kazama. If she got Kazama up on his toes and running all over the place, Chizuru didn't want to know how much power that woman could hold over her.

"She's known for many things, some of which are discipline, strictness, rules, and power. The head of the family may be Kazama's father, but that man is much nicer than she is. The wife is always the one who's worried about money, and thanks to that, the family is still the best financially, not saying that the father is useless."

Chizuru stared at Harada-sensei, taking everything in. Kazama had been the one to give her the job of his personal maid, but it was definitely his mother who had persuaded him into doing so. She has already seen the power the woman held over her own son, but she couldn't even begin imagining what kind of power she held over the business world financially. With power like that, she could help save many families going downpour. She could have helped the Yukimura family too! Yet, she didn't. Or at least, it didn't look like she did. \_Maybe she didn't really like my family much? \_Well, Chizuru couldn't ask for too much. The Kazama family may have been going through some financial issues at the time as well. Besides, she \_is\_ living in the Kazama mansion now. She shouldn't just go up and ask "hey, about my familyâ€|you know how they're working for another family? Yeah, can you pay that family so I can get my family back?"

She is so not going to ask that.

"Chizuru?"

"Hm?" She snapped out of her long, treacherous thoughts and looked up at her teacher, who was strangely calling her by her first name again. "By the way, why do you call Nagakura-san 'Nagakura-san', but you call me 'Chizuru'?"

He seemed lost for a second, his eyes wide and distant. Then, he smiled. "What would you rather be called?"

"I don't really mind." Well, if she could choose, she would rather him call her Chizuru, just because Yukimura didn't sound right for her anymore. "Chizuru, I guess."

"See?"

"Harada-sensei, you seem to know a lot about the Kazama family," she said suddenly.

"My family's a close friend, not as close as the Yukimura family is to them though. Ah, my family's a close friend of yours as well," he smiled, revealing those perfect rows of white teeth.

"Really?!" So, she could call Harada-sensei a family friend of hers? Somehow, having a teacher as a family friend was quite reassuring. "I didn't know that."

"Well, you were pretty young back then. I remember you though. You were really cute and you used to cry all the time, not saying that you're not cute anymore. You are, of course, and you've grown into a beautiful lady."

Oh, the sweet talk. Yet, it gets her every time.

Chizuru blushed. "Umâ€¦thanks."

\* \* \*

><p>The conversation with Harada-sensei was livelier today than it was yesterday, and she had enjoyed every bit of it. It seemed to her that Harada-sensei knew her family very well, and she wanted to ask him more, but the second bell had long gone and she couldn't risk missing more of her second period class, so he promised her that he would find some time to talk to her again later in the week. Of course, she happily accepted and skipped off to her next class.<p>

\_Wait, I should be running. \_

By the time she got to her next class, she was out of breath. \_I don't walk home or go to work anymore, so I probably gained some weight. And then there's the lunch boxes Kazama-sama gives me every\_ \_day.\_She sighed; she's never had trouble getting fit before. Maybe it was because she worked herself so hard all the time? She didn't know, but right now, she would give anything to get that healthy body of hers back.

"Hey, Chizuru! Your talk lasted longer today," Heisuke said, coming over to Chizuru. "What was it about this time?"

"Oh, nothing much, just confirming the stuff from yesterday. Hey, did you know that Harada-sensei's family was a close friend of my family?" She hadn't meant to brag or anything, but the look on Heisuke's face looked pretty competitive.

"My family knew your family too! In fact, my mom absolutely adores you! She has all these pictures of you," \_and Kazama\_, he added silently. Then, he realized how stalker-ish his mother sounded. "...Pictures of you at all these parties and banquets. 'Cause you know, she takes pictures of the whole gang. I, um, have a few photos with you too, I think."

Chizuru smiled and giggled at Heisuke's cute rambling. "I'd love to see those pictures one day." \_Maybe it'll help me remember more forgotten memories. \_

Heisuke brightened up and nodded vigorously. "Yeah! Sure! Come over some time! My mom would be so happy to have you over!"

Chizuru's smile widened and she nodded too. "I'd be more than happy to come over."

\* \* \*

><p>"Why don't you eat with your friends again?" Kazama suggested, looking up from the pile of documents placed on his table. "We have lots of things to do today, but nothing you can help with."<p>

"He's basically saying that you're going to get in our way," Shiranui's playful, and at this very moment, super annoying voice added.

"I'd be more than happy to leave for the day," Chizuru replied forcefully, glaring at the smirking Shiranui. "Before I go though, I'd like to have a chat with you, Chikage."

Shiranui whistled. "First names now?" Chizuru struggled to keep her rage in and kept her hands away from anything she could throw at the man.

"And only you," she added. She didn't want Shiranui of all people to eavesdrop on her conversation.

"Sorry, but can it wait until we get home?"

"Okay, so about Shizuâ€|Wait, what?" Did she just hear Kazama put her conversation aside? He never does that! He was always willing to listen to her!

"Sorry. Just take the food and go to your friends." His words were cold, but his tone was gentle. Chizuru sighed, \_no helping it then.\_

"Alright, but I'm saying this now. I'm taking more than usual for revenge, 'cause you're calling our conversation off until later." She quickly turned so he couldn't see her pout, but nothing goes unseen by the demon. He smirked, knowing how Chizuru was trying very hard right now to cope with him.

"Take as much as you want. Not like I can even eat today."

Chizuru couldn't help but giggle at this. "Are you sure you don't need my help?"

"Just g-"

"No, you'll only get in our way," Shiranui quickly said. Chizuru resisted the urge to throw the lunch box at him, but complied with throwing some books on the table. "Violent woman! Sheesh," she heard him mutter. And she laughed, because honestly, it was just too funny.

She gathered as much food as she could bring, snickered at the bruised Shiranui, and left.

And she was even thinking of going on a diet.

\* \* \*

><p>"Oh! You're eating with us today!" Heisuke's cheery voice welcomed her. "Right, so I called my mom just now and she said you can come over today."<p>

"Today? Oh, today's kind ofâ€¦" It was definitely abrupt, that's for sure.

"Heisuke, I don't think I'm going to come over anymore," Okita said.

"Huh? Why?"

"My stomach kind of hurts."

"Oh, no helping it then," Heisuke shrugged. "So, Chizuru, you're not coming today?"

Chizuru had to talk to him about Shizuka today, but that can wait until tomorrow. Today was her chance to look at all kinds of photos, maybe even some with Kazama in them! She felt like a stalker, but it doesn't count if her friend offers the photos for her to look at, right?

"I'll come."

"Oh, never mind. Heisuke, my stomach's fine now. I'll come over after school," Okita said, patting Heisuke on the back.

\_Somehow, I think I know what's going on, \_Heisuke mentally face-palmed. Okita can't be any more obvious when it comes to Chizuru, but then again, neither can he.

"How about you, Saitou?"

"I'll pass."

\_Saitou-san\_â€¦Last time she had talked to Saitou was the day he had hugged her in front of everyone. They had all gotten so angry too, but now here he was, acting normal. \_They probably made up. \_

Upon noticing her staring, Saitou turned to her. "What is it?"

\_Just wondering if you guys made up and all that. \_"It's nothing."

"If you're wondering about how we made upâ€¦" \_How does he do it, \_Chizuru thought sarcastically. "We always get into fights, but we eventually make up. It's like a cycle."

"Yeah, Chizuru. Don't worry about them. They're all immature idiots who have no control over their male instincts," Yamazaki entered the rooftop, having heard their whole conversation just now. "Sorry I'm late. I had to help Sannan-sensei."

"And you're not an immature idiot who has no control over your male instincts?" Heisuke scoffed. "And did you really have to add that last part in? It's not like we drool over Chizuru every day or anything."

"'Every day', you say," repeated Yamazaki amusingly.

"You get what I mean! And we're not saying you're not worth drooling over, Chizuru, it's just that-"

"Save it," Chizuru said flatly, cutting Heisuke off and giggling at his desperate attempt to explain things.

The rest of lunch went by smoothly. They all finished before the bell and had nothing to do, so they decided to walk around the school for a bit. Laughing and loud voices were heard as the small group of students walked pass, disturbing the classes who still had lectures going on. Windows shut every now and then, which just added to the laughter emitting from the group. Then, suddenly, like something every heroine would do, Chizuru tripped.

Except no one caught her, because they were all too busy laughing.

"Ah-" she yelped.

"Chizuru!" Four male voices yelled out, and arms prepared to support her from falling, but even as they started moving, she had already hit the ground.

"Owâ€|" She turned her body so she sat on her bottom and examined her knee. The knee she had fallen had been scraped, and was now bleeding horribly. She sighed, \_well this kind of hurts. \_

"Chizuru! Are you alright? I'm so sorry! I was so close, yet-" Heisuke started.

"No, it's alright. I just didn't see that rock over there," she smiled in an attempt to sooth the misled boy.

"What rock?" Okita searched around, and as ironic as it was, there was indeed no rock, no nothing, on the ground.

\_Rich schoolsâ€|\_

"You tripped over nothing," Saitou concluded.

"Maybe her shoelac- nope, she has no shoelaces," Heisuke added.

"You tripped over nothing," repeated Saitou.

"Okay! Maybe I'm a little bit clumsy." She could feel her cheeks flush and she turned away from her group of friends.

"I'll take her to the infirmary," Yamazaki suddenly said, coming up to the fallen Chizuru and supporting her by the shoulders. "Can you stand?"

"Um, I think so. I only hurt one knee, so this one can still walk normally."

"Alright, here we go." His arm circled around her waist to hoist her up, his hand pushing her against his body. The interaction between their bodies made her blush even more. "What is it, Yukimura-san? You don't have a fever too, do you?"

"Oh, no! It's just kind of hot today," she smiled nervously.

"It's less than 10 degrees Celsius todayâ€|" Heisuke stated.



She gulped.

Just why did her friends choose today to be "Prove Chizuru Wrong in Every Way Day"?

\* \* \*

><p>Together with Yamazaki and the rest of the gang, Chizuru made her way towards the infirmary. Since it was located on the first floor for convenience, it was pretty close by. She didn't have <em>that <em>much trouble getting there. After some worried glances and a few words of encouragement, Heisuke, Saitou, and Okita left, leaving Yamazaki and her alone.

"Wow, I've never been here before," she commented. The room was nice andâ€|white. The sheets were white, the bed was white, the pillow was white, and all the cabinets were too. And as if that wasn't enough, the floor, ceiling, and walls were white too. Didn't anyone ever think that any blood stains on the walls would be obvious? Still, she found no traces of blood or anything dirty on the walls and floor. \_Right, it's not like they're going to do surgery here or anythingâ€|\_

However, it \_was \_a little too white. How could the floor be so clean? Someone must be cleaning up after every time someone comes in here.

"I don't think you would want to be a regular visitor here, Yukimura-san."

"Haha, that's true. I don't want to get hurt all the time," she laughed, but Yamazaki's expression was serious. He took out a first aid kit from one of the cabinets and knelt down in front of her.

"That, and because the school nurse is pretty scary. There are rumours that he experiments on people."

"Aren't you his assistant though? You should know him pretty well." She shuddered as she felt an alcoholic swab against her scraped knee. Oh, how she dreaded those thingsâ€|

"Yeah, but I rarely talk to him. I only do what I'm told to do and leave. He never lets me see too much either, which makes him even more suspicious." He stopped wiping her wound with the swab, letting her calm down from the pain.

"You can continue," she said after realizing that he was waiting for her to give him the thumbs up.

"Well, I would never let him touch you." Her breathing stopped for a second. Was it just her or did that sound more intimate than it should have? "So, if you ever get hurt, just come to me."

\_If I can walk to you, that is. \_

"And if you can't come to me, call me."

\_If I have a phone, that is.\_

"And if you can't call me, yell my name."

"People are going to think I'm crazy!" She exclaimed, quite freaked out by how easily people can read her these days.

"It's okay, because I'll come to you," he smiled. She couldn't stop staring as he did so. After all, this was the first time he's shown such a sweet and promising smile to her. "There, you're done."

"What? Oh, thanks! A lot!" She smiled back just as sweetly.

\* \* \*

><p>"What is that?"<p>

"What's what?"

"That," Kazama pointed to the bandage on her knee.

"Oh, \_that...\_" Chizuru said, lifting her knee up. "I just fell, that's all."

"What?" He speed walked over. "Where? Why? When? How? Who did it?"

"Calm down! I just tripped, that's all," she said, pulling her skirt down as Kazama knelt down to look at her knee carefully. "What? You don't believe me?"

He didn't say anything, so she sighed. \_Wow, he doesn't believe me.

—

"What did you trip over?"

"Well, according to Saitou-san, I tripped over nothing." Which, now that she thought about it, was true. She just tripped. She didn't even trip over her own feet. "Oh yeah, I'm going to Heisuke-kun's today."

"What?" His eyes narrowed dangerously and she yelped. She shouldn't have accepted Heisuke's offer before she asked Kazama. She had promised Heisuke to meet him by the school gate, thinking that Kazama couldn't hold her back.

And he shouldn't be able to. It's not like he's her mom; she was merely staying at his mansion. He doesn't have control over her life, but she has to admit, he was pretty scary right now. Even if he isn't in control of her life, his scary attitude may be.

"I won't be staying for long! I promise! It's just for a project." Oh, how obvious her lies are. She was shaking uncontrollably, confidence shrinking under Kazama's glare.

He only looked at her for a couple more seconds before he spoke. "I'll pick you up at six."

"Only six?" She whined.

"Keep complaining, and it's going to turn into 5."

Gulping nervously, she nodded. "Six it is! See you then!" She quickly escaped, limping towards the school gate.

And it wasn't until she was getting into Heisuke's car that she wondered if Kazama even knew where Heisuke lived.

\* \* \*

><p>Thanks for reading! Always looking forward to reviews! ;D<p>

Now that I'm less lazy, here are the responses...

Dear \*\*Stalianha\*\*: I'm glad you thought so! ^^ Haha, too bad. She appeared again this chapter. :( LOOOOOL NOBODY CARES ABOUT HER FEELINGS XDDD SO TRUE THOUGH! ;) Ahh, too funny, I'm crying. I never get tired of reading your reviews xD Too funny too funny. I'm happy you shared your thoughts with me! Thank you for reading and reviewing! And thanks! Good luck to you too!

## 20. Chapter 19

Back! ^^

\*Lots of Heisuke  
>\*Some Okita<br>\*Little Kazama

\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>"Excited?" Heisuke bit his lip nervously, rubbing his palms together in anticipation.<p>

"Hm? Um, yeah, a little bit," Chizuru smiled politely.

"That's it?" He asked, dumbfounded. Well, he couldn't expect much. It wasn't like she was visiting the prime minister of Japan. How excited could a 16 year old girl get about visiting a friend's house anyway? They weren't kids. And above all, she has already seen the Yukimura and Kazama households. The Toudou household was much smaller in both size and power.

On the other hand, he was as nervous and excited as ever. The girl he admires in his house, the idea of that sent bursts of electricity to his heart, causing it to beat wildly.

"Well," she paused, "I'm really looking forward to those photos that you're going to show me."

"Huh?" He blurted out. "Oh, um, right! Yeah!" How could he forget? The reason she even agreed to come over in the first place was because she wanted to see her mom's photo collection of her. "\_Those\_photosâ€|"

She smiled, "is this your place?" A delicate finger of hers tapped the window of the car, pointing at the mansion up ahead.

"Hm? Ah, yeah, we're here." Why did the car ride seem so much shorter

today? And just when he wanted to spend some more time with her in the car! Just sitting beside Chizuru seemed to be enough, but he knew that once he entered the manor, his mother would be all over her, and they wouldn't get any time alone together.

Then, he remembered Okita. \_That bastard said he's coming later,\_ he grumbled darkly in his head. And why did he even ask Okita in the first place? Oh right, he was scared it was going to be awkward. And just as he had predicted, it \_was\_ awkward, but not in a bad way. It wouldn't make any sense to say this, but it was awkward in a comforting way. Wow, what a paradox.

"Um! Heisuke-kun? Do we get off?" The chauffeur had opened the door for her, but Heisuke seemed to be off in another dimension, so she didn't know if she should get off by herself or not.

"Hm? Oh, yeah. L-let's get off." \_What's wrong with me today? Stop spacing out!\_ He slapped himself on the cheek to wake himself up, much to Chizuru's confusion.

The mansion was relatively smaller and less grand, but that was if you were comparing it to Kazama's home. The place itself was gorgeous and! were those sparkles Chizuru saw? And why are there flower petals flying around? And who's that woman skipping towards her? "Heisuke-kun, is that-

"Heisuke darling!" A high, but mature, female voice sang. "Heisuke darling! Mommy's coming!" The woman was skipping rapidly towards them with flowers trailing behind her. It was all too! magical.

"Heisuke-kun, your place is like a castle. And your mother is like a princess," she giggled, amusement shown all over her face.

Heisuke sighed with exasperation. He didn't want to show Chizuru such an embarrassing mother. The flowers were nice. Flowers scored girls, but his mom was definitely embarrassing. Which was funny, considering the fact that his mother was the one who taught him how flowers scored girls.

He snuck a peek at the giggling girl beside him. \_Well, at least she's enjoying the flowers.\_

Yes, his front yard was a colourful mess of different species of flowers, but it couldn't compare to the even more colourful mess of flowers in front of Kazama's mansion. He's been there a couple times and after seeing the garden over there, he's concluded that the Toudous' garden was less of a mess. And when Heisuke says mess, he means a beautiful display of flowers. In his point of view though, flowers were a bore and an eyesore, literally. The explosive display of colours was blinding.

When his mother finally reached where they were standing (they hadn't moved an inch, and if anything, Heisuke would rather back up and pull Chizuru along with him), she was out of breath. The lady was getting close to her 40s, so skipping that whole distance was already a great accomplishment.

"Oh, why if it isn't Chizuru-san!" The woman tried to act surprised, but it was more than obvious (at least to Heisuke) that she had

planned all of this beforehand.

Chizuru was, of course, oblivious to this. She smiled and bowed. "Sorry for intruding, but thank you for having me over, Mrs. Toudou."

"Oh, look at her manners! We're more than happy to have you over today!" Then, the woman changed her tone. "Heisuke! You should learn from her! Look at that 90 degrees bow! Learn to bend perpendicularly!"

"What the heck, mom? Don't drag math into this!"

"Why not? Your math teacher is that handsome young man from the Hijikata family, right?"

"Handsome? Ew, mom!"

The mother and son yelled at each other back and forth, and Chizuru was barely able to suppress a laugh.

"What is it?" Heisuke asked, calling a temporary truce with her mother.

"Oh, nothing. I've just never seen such a warm family before." Well, that wasn't completely true; she has seen one before: in her dream. She recalled how her mother and father seemed so close -yet so far- in her dream and suddenly, she felt a tingling sense of nostalgia. It was as though they had just recently left her and the feeling of loneliness surfaced again. "Don't mind me; keep on arguing."

Heisuke and his mother looked at each other for a second, smiled at each other, and turned back to Chizuru.

"Chizuru-san, don't use such lonely words. Your parents love you a lot too," his mother said, walking over to Chizuru and taking her hands in her own.

Wow, for once, my mom sounds like a mother, Heisuke smirked. "Yeah, that's right, Chizuru. Feel free to come over whenever you want. We can be another family to you." He blushed as he realized just what he had hinted and his mother laughed. Chizuru was, as usual, oblivious to the hidden meaning in those words.

"Thank you! Thank you so much!"

\* \* \*

><p>"And then I told your father, 'no! Please! Don't take away my son!' and he said 'why would I take away your son?' You see, I always thought your father was a scary man, but at that point, everything changed, and the Yukimura family seemed so much nicer!"<p>

"Haha, really? Was father that scary looking or something?"

"Mmm, sort of. He had that intimidating aura that seemed to say 'I'm better than you, so don't you dare disobey me' so naturally, I'd be all over the floor, begging him to leave us be."

\_Hmm, sounds like a certain student council president.\_ Chizuru laughed.

"Hm, how about my mother?"

"Hm, let's see. Your mother was very gentle, and there was a time where I wondered what your mother saw in your father, and even how she got him to marry her. After talking to her though, I realized that she was a very sweet woman. Your parents are wonderful people, Chizuru-chan," Heisuke's mother said warmly.

Heisuke watched as the two females chatted endlessly. In just under 15 minutes, his mother had gotten closer to Chizuru, and she even called her "Chizuru-chan!" He was bored. If only he knew inviting Chizuru over would lead to this. Then again, he already knew, but just the thought of Chizuru in his house had gotten his hopes up.

Just as he thought things couldn't get any worse, someone entered through the open doorway of the living room.

"Good afternoon, Heisuke-kun, Auntie!" Okita chirped, grinning wildly.

"Oh, Souji-kun! Come in! Come in!" His mother responded just as enthusiastically. Sometimes, Heisuke wondered how in the world his mother had gotten so close to his friends. "I was just talking to Chizuru-chan here, but since you're all here, I'll go make you guys something to eat!" She bounced off the couch after giving Chizuru a pat on the shoulder and skipped away.

That woman was seriously too bright and sparkly to be his mother, or any mother for that matter. And watch, once they all leave and he's the only one left, she's going to go all mad on her and lecture him. The way her personality changes scares him sometimes and the one time he asked if she was on her period, he had punched him so hard, he flew all the way to the other side of the room. Okay, that was an exaggeration, but seriously. That woman's punches hurt.

Then, there was silence. The three of them didn't move from their positions: Chizuru was seated on the triple seated couch, Heisuke was leaning against the wall, and Okita was standing by the doorway.

"I'll get those photos now," Heisuke quickly said before things get even more awkward. The idea of leaving Chizuru and Okita in the same room alone didn't appeal to him, but he couldn't do anything about it for now. Besides, if Okita even laid a single finger on her in his house, he would pay.

Too bad that's exactly what Okita did.

"Chizuru-chan," he hummed devilishly, stroking her face with a long finger.

"U-um, y-y-y-yes?" She was vaguely reminded of the time he had asked her to feed him. A shiver went down her spine and Okita, having felt this, smirked deviously.

"Why are you being so nervous? There's nothing to be afraid of," he

cooed, although it only made her more nervous.

"I- I know. It's just, y-your finger," she pointed out, referring to the finger that was currently under her chin, tilting her head up to meet his. At that, his smirk widened.

"What about it?"

"C-can you please re-remove it?" Her eyes squeezed shut, not used to the close proximity.

"Does it make you uncomfortable?" His playful voice inquired. She felt him tug on her chin, pulling her closer to him. Her hand shot up to pull his hand away, but he used his free hand to pin both of her wrists down to the sofa in one swift movement. She shuddered and fought violently to free her hands.

"O-Okita-senpai! This is not the time and place to be playing around!" She said, her eyes flashing open again in her newly found confidence. That's right; he was just playing around. No need to take him so seriously. He wasn't going to go any farther than this anyway, or at least that was what she hoped.

"I'm not playing around," his voice lowered to a whisper. His tone was tight, as though he was hurt by what she said. "When it comes to you, Chizuru, I don't play around."

She noticed the way he left out the usual honorific, and her breathing stopped. He was being serious. "What do you mean?" Her eyes were slightly wide, eager to listen to what he was going to say next.

"Chizuru, you're different. You're innocent, pure, and untainted. I don't know how to deal with girls like that. Chizuru, you're the very first one." Her eyes widened by the second, not knowing where this was going, so he continued.

"I love you."

"AH!"

Both heads turned towards the entrance.

"Heisuke-kun," she managed to say. Her voice came out breathless and confused.

"Get off of her, Souji," Heisuke threatened, hurt visible in his eyes, although Chizuru didn't know why.

"That's Souji-senpai to-"

"I don't care!" He roared, anger and impatience audible in his tone.

The two glared at each other for a split second before Okita backed away from her with an exhausted sigh.

"Chizuru, I'll be waiting for your reply on Monday," he smirked his signature smirk as if nothing had happened and left.

Heisuke was huffing angrily and Chizuru was afraid to talk to him. So, the two remained silent until a cheerful mother popped into the room.

"I brought some leftover sna- Okaaaay, this is awkward." The woman eyed Heisuke accusingly, then turned to Chizuru worriedly, and repeated. "Okay, children. Time to eat!" She attempted to ease the heavy atmosphere, but no one budged.

Then, Chizuru smiled. "Thanks, Mrs. Toudou." She turned to a stern looking Heisuke and gulped. She's never seen the boy so serious before, and it was really starting to scare her. She hated this feeling in her gut. She wanted the old Heisuke back, the normal, happy-go-lucky Heisuke. "Heisuke-kun, let's eat. The snacks look really delicious," she convinced.

Said boy nodded and he made his way to the couch slowly. Chizuru felt the couch dip down as he sat, and suddenly everything was even more awkward.

They were sitting on opposite ends of the couch, and his mother was about to fill the gap in between when she noticed how both students were processing their own thoughts. Their constant lip biting and eye swirling told her so. The mid-aged woman bit back the urge to slap both of them on their cheeks to snap them back into reality, but no, these kids needed to do their own slapping. And it was up to them to solve whatever problems they were dealing with right now. They were at the age to come across conflicts and fix them just so they could come across more, so she was not going to butt in and treat them like babies. They were growing up.

With a few more accusing and worried glances, she placed the plate of sweets on the glass table and left.

Silence donned on the two again. So without another task at hand, Chizuru eyed the snacks carefully. She knew that now wasn't the time to be worrying about food, but the little snacks looked so tempting! There were assorted flavours of tiny cupcakes, cookies, and jelly, accompanied with two cups of Japanese tea. She watched as the steam rose from the mugs and her fingers itched forward to grab one. Inhaling the warm and familiar scent, she let a soft sigh escape her lips. She blew at it softly, hoping to cool the tea down so she could have a drink. Then, when she thought it was cool enough, she took a sip.

She should have waited longer.

"Hot!" She yelped, sticking her tongue out and fanning it in an attempt to cool her burnt tongue.

Heisuke immediately jumped upon hearing her yell. "Are you okay, Chizuru?" He was no longer on the other side of the couch and his hands were thrown somewhere between them awkwardly.

"Yea, I'm fine," she managed to say, embarrassed. She was making a fool out of herself; how smooth.

"Here, try a jelly. Maybe it'll cool it down a bit," Heisuke said, removing the mug from her hands and placing it on the glass table in front of them.



She tried his suggestion. "Wow, this is really good!"

Heisuke beamed, "my mom may look useless, but she's great at making sweets!"

"I heard that!" His mother's distinct voice called out.

"You were meant to!" Heisuke yelled back. Chizuru smiled gently. He had seemed so proud of his mother when he was complimenting her baking. Disregarding all the times they've argued with each other, Heisuke and his mother have a great relationship. And maybe the arguing was just another way to show their love.

Without thinking, Heisuke lifted a cookie to his lips and took a bite. "Yep, she's great at this kind of stuff." He smiled and threw the rest of the cookie in his mouth.

"Wow, I kind of want to learn from her," Chizuru giggled, stretching her arm to grab another jelly.

"Why don't you? I'm sure she'll be happy. She's got a lot of experience and all that. She even makes some of the snacks for the parties and banquets we go to." Then, he remembered the stack of photo albums he had brought down. "Oh right! The photos!"

He grabbed them from where he had left them and came back. Then, he flipped through an album until he found a picture of her. "This should be you," he said, recalling the time his mother had pointed to a young girl. Unless you were Kazama, all children looked the same to Heisuke. No one, and he means no one, has trouble finding Kazama, no matter how big the crowd is. His golden hair and crimson eyes stand out way too much, much to Heisuke's dismay. Every banquet he attended, he would always see a flash of golden some way or another. It was really, really annoying.

"Oh, yeah, I think that's me." She looked over the facial features of the child and nodded. That was definitely her. She didn't know how she knew, but she just knew. Maybe it was the child with golden hair and red eyes standing neatly beside her. Both children were smiling. Well, Kazama and Chizuru were smiling. We knew each other when we were still so young, she realized. And then she giggled.

"What is it?"

"Ah, the president looks so innocent in this photo. It's hard to imagine him like that nowadays."

At that, Heisuke frowned. It was always Kazama, Kazama, Kazama. Did she even notice that he was standing on her other side in the photo?

"Chizuru, try finding me," he blurted out, his tone filled with jealousy. He hated the way his voice sounded, but he didn't feel like correcting it. Sometimes, he felt that there was a need to show Chizuru just how jealous he was.

"Eh?" She had mistaken his tone for a challenge, and her eyes returned to the photograph. Her chocolate orbs roamed around on the page until they stopped. "You're standing right beside me,

right?"

He sighed, a hand raking through his hair. "Why did I ask you that?" The question was directed more to himself than her, but Chizuru looked up at him in confusion, her big round eyes searching his, and he suddenly lost the anger in him. "Here, feel free to look at them." He placed the rest of the pile on the table.

He leaned back and crossed his legs, flipping through one of the albums himself. Chizuru sat beside him, back straight and in every way elegant. The way she looked right now, you couldn't even tell that she's been away from her prestigious family for a decade. She had the manners of a young lady from a rich household as if she were tutored every day on manners and etiquette.

Chizuru ignored the observing gaze Heisuke was giving her and continued examining all the photos. She looked at each one with detail, trying to see if any of the people in the photographs looked familiar. She recognized a few people: her parents, Kaoru, Kazama, Heisuke, two kids who resembled Harada-sensei and Hijikata-sensei, and of course herself.

And interesting enough, those were the people she found herself standing beside or near in every photograph she was in. Maybe she was really close to Harada-sensei, Hijikata-sensei, and Heisuke in the past? The two older boys were much taller than her, but in some of the pictures, she found their arms around her shoulders as if they were friends. Hm, weird. She knew Harada-sensei had known her, but even Hijikata-sensei?

In another picture, mini Hijikata-sensei was handing mini Chizuru a bag of crops. She knew because the tips of the plants were sticking out.

She flipped the page and was met by a crying girl. Oh wait, that was her. She was crying, and mini Harada-sensei was by her side. He looked like he was trying to calm her down. On her other side was mini Hijikata-sensei, and somehow, by the stubborn look on the boy's face, she knew that he was the one who had made her cry. Harada-sensei was panicking, arms flinging around and sweat beading his face. Chizuru tried to imagine what it would have been like and laughed. Heisuke, having heard the soft chuckle coming from her, looked at the album she was clutching in her hand.

"Oh, that picture," he laughed nervously. "My mom really likes to take pictures of you. She was so determined to capture a photo of every emotion you made. Creepy, I know."

"I heard that too!" His mother's voice came once again. This time, Chizuru laughed.

She flipped the page again. This time, it was Kazama and her. They were holding hands, both grinning happily. She took a closer look and realized that both of them were wearing rings. Well, rings made out of the stem of a flower.

\* \* \*

><p><em>The wind blew gently and the grass on the meadow swayed. The adults were all gathered by the picnic tables, eating and chattering

about future business plans. The children were scattered around, each doing whatever they felt like doing. Some were running around, some were with their parents, and some were just sitting around. On the green field stood two of the many children gathered at the event.  
<em>

"\_Chika-chan! When I grow up, I'm going to marry you!" She demanded proudly, one hand on her hip and the other pointing at him. Normally, Kazama would think that it was rude, but coming from Chizuru, it was pretty darn cute.\_

"\_Okay," he smirked with triumph, "but not before I marry you first!"  
\_

"\_No! I'm going to marry you first!" \_

"\_No, I will!" \_

\_The two continued to argue with each other. Then, someone came up behind the two.\_

"\_Technically, when the both of you marry, you're going to end up marrying at the same time." It was Heisuke's mother. "And aren't you kids a bit too young to think about this?" She smiled with sheer amusement, her warm eyes crinkling up. \_

"\_No, Auntie. We already have our future planned!" Chizuru exclaimed excitedly, jumping up and down. Meanwhile, Kazama nodded thoughtfully. \_

"\_Oh, so that's how it works." \_

\_That day, Kazama learned that when a couple marries, they marry at the same time. And Chizuru? Well, she was too excited to notice the woman's previous words. \_

"\_Chizuru," he leaned down and pulled a wild flower off of the ground. "It's a promise then. We'll both marry each other." He smiled and added, "at the same time." He's watched this about a million times on TV, so he was pretty smooth about it. This was the first step to marriage, the engagement. He wrapped the stem around her right ring finger, leaving the left ring finger free for the promised day. \_

\_Chizuru smiled back and nodded, her chestnut hair being blown freely yet gracefully by the wind. "It's a promise then." \_

\_Snap! The sound of a shutter was heard and the very, very young couple turned. \_

"\_Don't mind me, kids. Just preserving some memories," replied the woman casually, preparing to capture yet another photo. The two just smiled and laughed as the shutter sounded over and over again.\_

\* \* \*

><p>"Chizuru?! Chizuru! Snap out of it!" Heisuke's voice that had been previously blocked out came into focus again, and she turned to him abruptly.<p>

"Oh, uhâ€¦sorry. What were you saying?" She acknowledged him, but he could tell her eyes were still distant. She was still in a daze.

"I was just wondering why you were on the same page for so long," he said slowly, eyes drifting down to the photo in front of her. It pained him to see her so fazed by a photo of her and Kazama together. He shook his head and turned back to Chizuru. The picture was of the past, nothing to do about it now. "And then when I called your name, you didn't respondâ€¦Chizuru?"

"H-huh?" She snapped her head back up again, the blood rushing down her head. Suddenly, she felt very dizzy.

Heisuke's gaze lingered on Chizuru's face for a while longer before he stood up, taking the photo album from her lap and setting it on the table. "That's enough for today, Chizuru. You can come over again another time. It's almost five, and I think I hear footsteps approaching. Kazama's probably here to pick you upâ€¦Chizuru!"

"S-sorry," Chizuru apologized weakly. She felt sleepy and her eyes threatened to lay shut. It was as though she was on the brink of slumber, but it was only five! Why was she so sleepy? She felt herself waver a bit, her head moving around in lazy circles. She had a headache, that's what. Maybe she shouldn't have eaten so much cold jellyâ€¦

That was her last thought as she dropped onto the couch, giving into the darkness.

\* \* \*

><p>Thanks for reading~ Looking forward to reviews!<p>

I CAN FINALLY WORK ON MY HISTORY ESSAY! Psh, I can finish it by today...totally. To-tal-ly. Total...ly...

Non-Member Reviews:

aizawa saki: Thank you for sharing your thoughts with me! I'm so glad it cracked you up! ^^ Haha, yeah. Kazama's such a stalker. Since he has so much power, I'm sure he knows where everyone lives.  
xD

Chizkage: Love your name, btw. LOOL I feel so proud xD Thank you very much! I really appreciate it! 3

smiley face: I agree! He is a sexy beast! :)

~~~Thank you for reviewing!

## 21. Chapter 20

**\*\*Disclaimer: Hakuouki is not mine.\*\***

\* \* \*

><p>"**Mommy! Daddy! Don't go!**" She yelled, tears staining her rosy cheeks. Her mother and father smiled gently and waved, pulling a

crying little boy along with them. "Kaoru! Don't leave me!"  
<em>

\_The old woman beside her nudged her in an attempt to pull her back, but she didn't bother giving the woman her attention. She didn't want to miss her last chance of seeing her family. \_

"\_I'm sorry about this," her mother whispered to the old woman, who nodded a response. \_

"\_It's okay. I'll take good care of her." \_

"\_No! Why does Kaoru get to leave with you?" The young girl screamed, stomping her feet and for the first time, throwing a tantrum.

\_

"\_Kaoru is leaving too. We can't take care of him anymore, but we can't leave both of our children in Tanaka-san's care. It would be too much for her to handle at her age," her father spoke carefully. At the time, she was angry and jealous. Angry at the fact that her parents were leaving her, and jealous of Kaoru, who got to stay with them longer than she did.\_

\_She didn't respond and only sobbed quietly to herself. \_

\_Goodbye. \_

\* \* \*

><p>She opened her eyes and was met by a swirling sense of dizziness. Somehow, she wasn't as surprised anymore. This was starting to get into a daily routine, waking up from a dream full of familiar memories. Blinking rapidly to adjust to the darkness she was surrounded by, she tried to make out where she was.<p>

"You awake?"

"Heisuke-kun?" She called out, not knowing where to look.

"I'm here," he called from his seat on a chair. He turned on the lights and she winced. "It's already 7."

"WHAT?" She screamed, leaping off of the couch. Kazama was supposed to pick her up at 6! \_Where is he?\_

"He's talking to my mom right now," Heisuke answered her unspoken question and she sagged in relief.

"I see-sorry abou-"

"It's okay. Don't worry about it." His voice was unusually solemn.

"Heisuke-kun-" she started without an idea of what to say next.

Suddenly, he got up. "I'll go get him."

"Ah, wai-" Her hand unconsciously reached for his back, but he had already left.

Something told her that Kazama was the last person Heisuke wanted to see right now.

\* \* \*

><p>"So, how did you end up staying past your curfew?"<p>

"Sorry, but I didn't know I had a curfew. I was just told to be ready by 6."

"And how did you end up lying dead on the couch?"

"I wasn't exactly dead."

"That brat was sitting beside you the whole time. Doesn't he have any homework to do?"

"Don't you?"

At that, his eyes narrowed on her, but her face remained glued to the scenery outside. They were in the backseat of the vehicle he had brought to pick her up in. The atmosphere was tense and even the driver had to refrain from meeting the president's eyes.

When Heisuke came back with Kazama, it had been the scariest thing Chizuru had experienced in a while. Even Okita's confession had been long gone from her mind. It was as though bolts of electricity were emitting from his form, and even Heisuke's hair had started standing up way above his head.

For a while, it was just a staring contest between Chizuru and Kazama until the taller of the two left the room. She didn't have to follow him, but she did. And that was how they ended up in the car, arguing with one another.

"You sure have the nerve, Chizuru." She could hear his amusement in his words and she resisted the urge to turn around to see that smirk she knew he had plastered on his face. "As the student council president, my only job is to watch over the student body."

"But what about school work? Aren't you a senior? Shouldn't you be choosing a university soon?"

"That has already been handled by my family."

Oh, so he gets to go to a nice university because his family's rich? Oh wait, that would make sense.

"Are you smart enough to withstand a top university, Chikage?" She spun her head around to face him and practically snorted, but she refrained from doing so because it was unfeminine to do so.

His eyes narrowed on her once again. "Just try me." Her eyes widened at the confidence of his tone. He's not the demon president for nothing! "Amazed by me?" He smiled with triumph.

"Yes," she admitted, "but that does not mean I don't recognize my own abilities either." It wasn't like he was smarter than she was or anything. She did get the scholarship into Kazama High after

all.

He seemed to be contemplating something with himself as his eyes laid over hers. Then, he turned away.

"You just woke up. It would be wise to rest a bit more."

\* \* \*

><p>She hadn't realized that she had fallen asleep until she felt a slight shift beside her. Her eyelids fluttered open and she yawned. <em>Ahh, where am Iâ€| She felt a pair of arms wrap around her and she looked up. She found herself in a very awkward position.<em>

"What are you doing?" She asked, dumbfounded.

"Lifting you up and out of the car, as you can clearly see."

"Ohâ€| No, it's alright. I can get out myself," she pushed his arms away gently and urged him to back away so she could get out.

"Really?" He teased. "You were sleeping pretty soundly. Ah, and your head was lying on my shoulder too."

She flushed. "I- I'm very sorry for the inconvenience," she replied quietly.

"It was no inconvenience," he smirked, "in fact, I enjoyed it quite a bit."

She ran into the mansion.

\* \* \*

><p>As soon as she got to her room, she busted out her pencil case and textbooks and started doing her homework. She hadn't even noticed Rin standing in the doorway until she spoke. "When you're done your homework, come down for dinner," she said.<p>

Chizuru jumped, but nodded. "Thanks, Rin-san."

\_Okay, now focus on literature!\_ After about half an hour, she was done. Today's work load wasn't too bad and the homework was actually pretty easy. For a top school, they sure give little homework.

She stood up, stretched, and yawned. She headed towards the door, but was startled when she saw Kazama leaning against the doorway, looking awfully irritated with that scowl of his.

"Ohâ€|umâ€|.hi," she greeted meekly. He didn't respond. "I was justâ€|uhâ€|going downâ€|.for dinner."

He only tsked and left.

\_Alright then.\_

\* \* \*

><p>"Young master was so angry! Did you see him at dinner?" One of the nearby maids whispered in another's ear, but that maid wasn't very good at whispering. Chizuru could clearly hear what she had just said.<p>

"Really?" The other maid "whispered" back. These girls were very bad at gossiping, Chizuru concluded, but that was favourable on her side, so she silently thanked them for their loud whispering.

"Yeah. He was arguing with his mother!"

"Seriously? But he barely talks back to her!"

"I know!"

"What were they arguing about?"

"Oh, about thatâ€|" The maid trailed off and Chizuru felt a pair of eyes on her. She turned and saw them looking right back at her. Smiling timidly, she waved. Did they notice she was eavesdropping?

The maids smiled and waved back before continuing their conversation outside.

"Chizuru! Stop spacing out and start eating. This is your only break, so use it wisely." Rin explained from beside her. "This is the first time we've had personal maids work in the house, but I have a feeling this is how it works. Since being a maid and working for the family is our job, the only time we get a break is during meals or when our work is done, and even then, the family members may call on us and ask us to help them."

It sounded like a pretty nasty job to her, but nonetheless, she nodded, taking a bite out of her rather fancy dinner.

"Your only job is to tend to Kazama-sama. So you aren't dismissed from your tasks until he says so. I assume meals have to be confirmed by him before you can eat."

"Wowâ€|" \_So I'm like a slaveâ€|\_

"I don't know if being young master's personal maid is a good or bad thing, but good luck. I think you'll need it."

\* \* \*

><p>"I've brought you tea, Kazama-sama," she called from the other side of the door. "And some fruits." According to Rin, who was present when Kazama was arguing with his mother, he hadn't finished his dinner. Rin had suggested bringing the rest of it, but Chizuru didn't think anyone would have the appetite to eat steak after arguing with their mother.<p>

He didn't answer, so she just barged in.

"Kazama...-saâ€|ma..." They stared at each other for a while. "Sorry!"

She had walked in on him changing.



"Kazama-sama! Why didn't you warn me?" She asked after spinning around to face the wall. She placed the tray of food on a table near the door and was about to step out when an arm grabbed hers.

"It's not like you hate seeing me like this," he smirked beside her ear, a little bit too close for comfort. His other arm moved to shut the door.

\_He's got a point.\_ It was only for a split second, but for that one moment, she had seen his build. He wasn't disgustingly ripped, nor was he too skinny; he was somewhere in between lean and muscular. Her mind flashed back to his knowing gaze as he threw his shirt onto the bed; it was as though he knew she had liked it. What did he take her for? A pervert? \_Of course I would be staring if it was my first time seeing a man undress!\_"It's uncomfortable," she finally said, deciding not to answer him about whether she had liked it or not. He hadn't said it as a question, but if she slipped and said anything about it, he would be on her case for quite some time. She started leaning away from him as she felt his bare chest accidentally make contact with her back.

"Shouldn't \_I\_ be the one who's embarrassed here?" He teased, hands making their way towards her cheeks to find them burning hot, as he had well expected.

"Well, \_somebody\_'s not embarrassed enough, so I have to be embarrassed for them," she flushed even more (to Kazama's pleasure), pushing his arms and shoving his hands away. "And if you stay like that, you're going to catch a cold." Hopefully, that would change his mind and make him put a shirt back on. Luckily, it did.

"Worried about my wellbeing?"

She rolled her eyes. "Of course," she threw back sarcastically. His smirk faded.

"I don't really have anything for you to do, so you can go and rest. We're going to school early tomorrow," he explained as he walked into his closet. It was a walk-in closet and based on how his voice nearly disappeared at the end, she could tell it was a \_big\_ walk-in closet.

"What time?" She worried it was too quiet when he didn't answer. Then, he walked out holding his school uniform.

"Six."

"Wait, weren't you going to get something to wear? Why your uniform?"

"The one I usually wear is in the wash, so I needed a replacement for tomorrow."

She nodded in understanding. She didn't have enough money to afford a backup uniform, but she knew that many people had backups.

"And I sleep half-naked," he added.

\* \* \*

><p>"<em>Granny! Don't leave me! You're the only one left!" A young girl cried. "Don't leave!"<em>

"\_Chizurê| "\_

"\_Young lady, please don't yell. This is a hospital. And your grandmother won't be able to take it. Let her final moments be in peace. Smile for her."\_

"\_Granny," she sobbed, but she followed the nurse's advice and tried to smile. It didn't work.\_

"â€|\_Find- "\_

\* \* \*

><p>"Chizuru!"<p>

She woke up, sobbing, to the gentle shaking of her shoulders and the sound of her name. She looked up to see Kazama staring down at her, his hands gripped around her shoulders worriedly. His eyebrows were furrowed, and he looked tired and worried.

She sat up and checked the time. It was only 3. "Why did you wake me up?" she asked, voice quiet and straining to hear.

"You looked like you were in pain."

"I needed to hear what granny said at the end."

He looked at her in confusion. Another round of tears rolled down her cheeks as she realized what she had just seen. It was the death of the old woman in her previous dream, the death of the granny who had taken care of her after her parents left.

A thumb brushed gently under her eyes in an attempt to wipe the tears away. It didn't work. If anything, more tears were pouring out.

Her last word was "find" and she had been cut off by Kazama waking her up. That thought annoyed her and she resisted the urge to glare at him. Besides, he only woke her up because he saw how much pain she was going through. He wasn't the one to blame. In fact, there was no one to blame. Not even the people who had taken her parents away from her, because it was her parents themselves who had wanted to leave.

"Do you think you'll be fine?" Kazama sounded worried for once, but now wasn't the right time to ask what was wrong with him.

"Yeah," she answered, sighing, the last of her tears being wiped dry by his hands.

"Would you feel more secure sleeping with me?"

"Get out."

\* \* \*

><p>She knew it was rude to force him out of her room when she was

living in his mansion, but she couldn't help it. Maybe it was just his way of cheering her up, but asking her to sleep with him was definitely not in her comfort zone. So, instead of lashing out at him and probably getting lectured on it later, she decided to kick him out.<p>

He didn't mind, which was odd. Perhaps he knew how tired she was, and he himself was pretty tired. The two wanted sleep, but not together. At least she didn't want to.

But how had he known that she was crying? Was she yelling? That could have been a possibility.

As she went through her daily routine at a much earlier time than usual, she thought back on last night (or if you were speaking technically, early this morning). She hadn't realized when she had made it to Kazama's door until she was in his room and seated on his couch. Even when he was right in front of her, she was still in a daze.

"Chizuru, breakfast time."

"Hn," she responded absently. She stood up and followed him wordlessly until she realized what he just said.

"Oh! I am so sorry! I totally forgot to bring the tea and everything, I mean, after last night, I've just been kind of-" She realized she was rambling, so she stopped. "I'm sorry."

He eyed her with a sigh. "It's fine. I don't really need tea in the morning." She still looked unsure, so he continued. "You don't need to do anything unless I tell you to, got it?"

"...Yes."

"Good."

They made it to the dining room and she proceeded into the kitchen to see that it was empty. \_Wait, where are the chefs?\_

"It's early. Do you expect them to be up?" He asked, walking up behind her.

"Ohâ€¦ so do I have to do the cooking?" She swallowed. Cooking was okay, but what if she accidentally poisoned him? She's got enough experience (since she \_did\_ work at a cafÃ©) and she's got some recipes that she made up, but would they fit his taste? From what Chizuru could remember, all granny ever did was cook, but she has never taught her anything. Well, she \_was\_ pretty young, so cooking would be dangerous.

"No. \_I'll\_ be cooking."

"What? You?" She repeated, but he didn't answer her. Instead, he made his way into the kitchen and started pulling things out from the fridge and cupboards.

"Just watch me."

So she did, observing every single action he took. From the way he cracked eggs to the way he flipped them, everything was graceful. There were no traces of the "demon" all the students had talked about.

She sat down as he set the plate of eggs, french toast, and various slices of fruit in front of her. Even the way he arranged it was nice!

"It's delicious!" She exclaimed after swallowing her first mouth full of french toast. He smirked and they both continued eating.

It was exactly six by the time they got to school.

"There's a student council meeting," he explained as they walked pass several classrooms.

"And why is it so early?" Knowing Kazama, he wouldn't choose such an early time.

"The disciplinary committee decided on the time. They believed it was the best time to talk about a few... troublemakers."

That was true. It was definitely better to come to school early and discuss everything before all the other students started coming. Still, the disciplinary committee must be a group of strict students to even think that coming to school early would be a good thing.

Then she remembered. Wasn't Saitou a member of the disciplinary group?

He does seem very strict.

They turned at a corner. "You're attending too."

"But I'm hardly in the council!" All she ever did was sort a couple documents. That's literally all she did. And they call her the secretary!

He looked at her for a short moment before looking forward again. "A member's a member. And you will have to write down everything we discuss in the meeting today."

"Everything?" That was going to be a lot of writing.

"As much as you can. Just look like you're doing something."

What a thing for a president to say, she giggled to herself. Still, Kazama was pretty easy on her. She guessed she was lucky for that. And even as a maid, he goes pretty easy on her as well.

He ignored her giggling and slid open the door, stepping in without another word. Chizuru followed closely, but when she noticed a few other people in the room, she paused to bow and greet them. "Good morning."

They nodded and greeted her back.

Content that she had made a good first impression, she carried on.

She saw Kazama pat the seat beside her gently, so she decided to take his offer and sit there.

"Oi, that's my seat!" Someone yelled, stomping into the room. Chizuru turned around just as she was about to sit down to see Shiranui storming in.

"Oh, good morning, Shiranui-san," she chirped.

He growled. "Kazama! What is this? That spot's mine!"

"Stop being such a baby and just sit beside her," Kazama sighed and pulled on Chizuru's arm, urging her to sit.

"Cheh, what kind of husband are you?" Shiranui mumbled.

"Husband?" Chizuru questioned, raising an eyebrow.

"Don't worry about it," he shook his head. "Shiranui. Sit."

"Ohhhh," he stretched the vowel, "so you're cheating on me now? You got yourself a new wife?"

"Hey, what is he talking about?" Chizuru nudged Kazama, who only closed his eyes in concentration.

"I thought \_I \_was your wife," Shiranui carried on.

"Shut up!" Kazama roared.

Chizuru shrunk into her seat and watched as the battle began.

\* \* \*

><p>"Soâ€|you guys are husband and wife?" She confirmed.<p>

"No. That bastard just suddenly called me his husband and it stuck," Kazama muttered with hatred in his expression as well as his tone.

"Did you agree to it?"

"No," he sighed exasperatedly and calmed himself before speaking. "In the council, I am the president and he is the vice president." She nodded.

"In other words, I have the King's chair and he has the Queen's," he spoke exhaustedly.

\_That is very sexist. Who said girls can't be the higher ruler?\_

They were currently walking down the hall and back into the student council office. Shiranui was somewhere in the back with Amagiri, just safely out of earshot. "I see... so according to Shiranui, Amagiri's the grandmother and I'm the son?"

"No, just leave it. Don't think about it. Shiranui is mental."

"I am not!"

Or at least she thought they were out of earshot.

Shiranui breezed his way to them and put an arm around Chizuru's shoulders. "This girl's my son. I mean, think about it a bit," he said, poking Chizuru's temple. "She sat between us. \_Between us.\_"

"Your point?" Kazama asked, glaring at Shiranui to take his hands off her. However, he didn't.

"Don't children usually sit between their parents? So they could protect the child?"

"Umâ€¦ I don't mind being in this pretend family," because it was actually kind of fun (but she wouldn't admit that), "but why am I a male?"

"Because Amagiri and I are females," Shiranui answered matter-of-factly.

"Then what about Kazama-sama?"

"Kazama is an exception. After all, the head of the family has to be a brave, mighty male so he can protect all the women," he replied intelligently, playfully twirling her locks.

She nodded slowly.

Kazama pulled her away from her "mother" and dragged her into the student council office, and then into his private office. When Shiranui tried to follow, Kazama poked his head out and said, "males of the family only."

She could hear Shiranui tsk loudly, but snicker as he left. Chizuru gulped from inside the room. What had she just gotten herself into?

\* \* \*

><p>"You agreed to be the son of the family."<p>

It wasn't a question, but she nodded anyway.

"And I am the father."

She nodded again.

"We're both males."

She looked up and saw him smirk sinisterly.

"You know what this means, Chizuru?"

She tried to swallow the lump in her throat. "What?"

"We have no problem seeing each other naked, right?"

"â€¦WHAT?"

After a few insults being thrown from Chizuru's direction, a lot of smirking from Kazama's direction, and \_a ton\_ of arguing, the two finally came out. She was absolutely exhausted from disputing with Kazama. The guy was nice, but he could be pretty strict when he felt the need to.

"Shiranui-san," she called out, waving her arms around aimlessly in an attempt to call him over.

"Yeah, son?" She tried not to shudder, but felt it increasingly hard to as he continued. "You know, as your mother, I can choose your wardrobe. Let's get you out of that uniform and start with something sexy."

\_What kind of family did he grow up with, \_she wondered. She ignored his last words and continued.

"Shiranui-san, about this whole family thingâ€¦ Kazama-samaâ€¦ I mean, both Kazama-sama and I think it's kind ofâ€¦ I mean, it's \_really\_ weirdâ€¦ Uhâ€¦ annoying! We think it's annoying," she managed to finish after a few dark glares from Kazama.

Shiranui stared at Kazama, who had his arms crossed and was now standing behind Chizuru. He was giving her an approving look, which she couldn't see. Kazama had obviously given Chizuru a lecture or punishment of some sort to have changed her mind.

"Alright, what did you do?" Shiranui accusingly questioned.

Kazama smirked. "None of your business."

"Ruining my family \_is\_ my business. Don't you want Chizuru here to experience a nice, warm family?" He said with a playful smile, coming behind Chizuru and wrapping an arm around her.

\_Ah, that struck a nerve there. \_

"She has one. She doesn't need-."

"And where are they? Where's her family?" It was audible in Shiranui's tone that he was accusing Kazama of something, but what?

"What are you talking about?" Kazama glared. "If I knew, don't you think I would have already made arrangements for them to meet?"

"Who knows?" He left the question hanging in the air.

Chizuru gulped. "Umâ€¦ guys, I think school's starting soon. I'll just be on my way now. Bye!" She jumped up and started skipping towards the exit. When she was sure she was out of sight, she ran down the hall.

"No running!" She heard a disciplinary member yell behind her.

"No yelling!" she yelled back, not slowing down even a bit.

\* \* \*

><p>Thanks for reading!<p>

Non-member Reviews:

LuckyLucy: Yeah, I love that woman. LOL No, thank you for reading.  
:)

Stalianha: It's never too late to wish someone Merry Christmas. ;)  
Yes, I love Yamazaki too! I know what you mean! xD I've already  
watched it, and yes he was so cute! I fangirled 3 Not necessarily  
fall in love, but respect or like. Does it seem like they all like  
her? I'm sorry if it does. D; I'll be sure to back down a little bit.  
Sorry, I'm not very good at organizing the story and characters. XD  
I'll work on it though! :o Thank you for your feedback! I really  
appreciate it!

Olivia: Thank you so much! Haha yes, he must have been worried  
sick!

AnimeAishiteru: Thank you so much for reviewing! I really appreciate  
your courage! ^^ LOL Yes, his mom is quite a stalker! xD Thank you so  
much once again!

~~~Thank you for reviewing!

## 22. Chapter 21

Bishie indicators...

>\*Little Heisuke<br>\*Loads o' Kazama  
>\*Some Harada-sensei<p>

A/N: I am very sorry for the late update, but I assure you: no matter  
how long I'm gone, I will never abandon this story.

\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki. \*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Huffing heavily, Chizuru walked into her classroom. It was still  
quite early, so she was pretty sure her excuse about how school was  
starting soon would only get her so far before Kazama came stomping  
in. However, as the moments passed on, no charging demon came  
rampaging in so she concluded that she was safeâ€|for  
now.<p>

Harada-sensei was at his desk as usual, eyeing her warmly yet  
confusedly. "What's got you up on your toes so early in the morning?"  
he asked as soon as she stopped panting for air.

Chizuru tried her best to smile. "N-nothing." She hoped she sounded  
convincing enough. Luckily, Harada-sensei pried no more.

"Putting that aside," he said, walking up to her desk, "Have you  
heard anything about your parents lately?"

\_My parents? Why would he ask all of a sudden?\_

"I'm afraid not. I haven't heard from them since they left." Well,  
that would be a lie. She used to get letters from them for a while,



but they suddenly stopped coming. She would've written back, but there was no return address. Those days, she had mixed feelings towards her parents: happy that they decided to mail her and angry that they had left her. She should have known better. It was enough just to hear that they were alive. Nowadays, Chizuru had no guarantee whether her parents even existed anymore. Of course, the thought had scared her, so she had refused to think further into it.

"I see."

She glanced up at him and saw him do the same to her. He smiled gently. "If you're ever feeling lonely, feel free to drop by my office."

"You have your own office?" Don't schools usually have department offices? She's never heard of private ones before.

"Of course I do. Was that not the case in your old school?"

"â€|No?"

He chuckled, his eyes crinkling up. "Better start getting used to life here then. I bet you've never eaten at the cafeteria either, have you?"

"No," she answered frankly. She's never even seen it before, let alone step inside. "Why? Is it really fancy or something?"

"Definitely. The menu is off the chart, in both taste and price."

Yep, looks like she will never go there. "Oh, I see," she replied dumbly.

"I'll treat you, if you want," he grinned. "Anything for my favourite student!"

\_Favourite student? Me? \_She \_was\_ pretty smart, but to go as far as calling her his favourite student?

"Uhâ€|thank you, but it's alright." She wouldn't want to waste his money. Besides, she has Kazama's lunchâ€| \_Come to think of it, did we even pack it today? \_

â€|\_Well then.\_

"Did you bring your lunch today?" Her teacher questioned.

\_Nice, sensei, right on the mark.\_

She sighed. "No, I'm afraid I didn'tâ€|"

"Then today's perfect! Meet me by room 148 at the beginning of lunch. I'll show you around the cafeteria while I'm at it. How's that?" He winked. Chizuru couldn't help but break into a smile.

"That would be lovely."

Just then, the door slid open. In walked Shizuka.

"Good morning," she mumbled.

"Early as usual," Harada-sensei remarked, returning to his desk.

She merely nodded. Chizuru watched as the innocent looking  
"looking", that is, girl moved to her seat. That was when Shizuka  
turned and faced her. "What is it?"

"Um, nothing. Sorry," Chizuru apologized meekly. Could she ask? She  
was really curious about the deal Kazama and Shizuka had made. Last  
time she asked Kazama, he had skillfully avoided fully answering her  
questions. "It's just uh remember Kazama?" A second after she  
spoke these words, Chizuru regretted it deeply. The dark expression  
on Shizuka's face couldn't have meant well, but then it dispersed and  
she was normal "looking- again.

"There's nothing going on between us. I'm sure I told you this," her  
tone was patient and gentle, but who knew what kind of emotions were  
lurking inside? "I will never intrude on your relationship with  
Kazama-sama."

Relationship? "What relationship are you talking about?" She  
wondered out loud.

Shizuka's eyes widened slightly and then she giggled. "Don't play  
dumb with me. I know you two are dating."

Chizuru nearly choked on air. Dating? Was this girl nuts?

"Listen, Chizuru-san," Shizuka cooed, coming over and sitting on the  
chair beside her. She took Chizuru's hands in hers. "I am jealous,  
if that's what you're wondering, but I'm not that bad of a person.  
You kept your promise to send me on a date with him. He doesn't like  
me; he's proven that, but that just shows how much he loves you.

"As a new friend of yours, I can't do anything but support you." She  
smiled, and Chizuru felt like that was the most genuine smile she had  
ever seen coming from Shizuka. "I just wanted to see if even  
little-old-me could attract such a man, but I guess not. Once again,  
I'm very sorry to have caused you so much trouble. I hope you'll find  
it in your heart to forgive me. And if possible, it'd be wonderful if  
we could start anew."

Chizuru nodded slowly. At that moment, she had the biggest urge to  
ask something. "Didn't you befriend me so you could get closer to  
Kazama?"

For the longest time, she had felt like she was in a competition with  
Shizuka, and the winner would obtain Kazama as the prize.

"That's true, but I admire you all the same. I thought you wouldn't  
agree to set me up with him, but you did. Even I was shocked," her  
hands tightened. "You're a true friend."

Chizuru didn't know what to say, much less think. All this time, she  
thought Shizuka was some, dare she say, slut who was out chasing  
after guys. Looks like she got her all wrong.

"I'm sorry," Chizuru felt close to tears.

"Don't apologize. \_I'm\_ the one who needs to apologize here."

"You've already apologized! I just didn't believe you! I'm really sorry!"

Harada-sensei listened in as the two girls compensated for each other's mistakes. He wasn't eavesdropping. The two girls just \_had\_ to choose the classroom as their spot to apologize, so it wasn't his fault, was it now? He was just doing some last minute marking when they started talking. Next thing he knew, he couldn't focus on his work anymore.

With a sigh and the thought that he wasn't going to get any work done, he put down his pen and smiled at his students approvingly.

\* \* \*

><p>When Heisuke walked in, Chizuru didn't know what to say.<br>When he sat down, her mouth opened, but no words came out.<br>When he didn't turn to her, she told herself not to get disappointed.<br>And when class ended and he hadn't spoken one word to her, she felt sorry. She didn't know why, but she knew he was depressed. And it was all her faultâ€|or maybe semi her fault.

The rest of it had to be Kazama's fault.

The bell rung, signaling second period. Unable to take it any longer, Chizuru stood up and blocked Heisuke from escaping.

"Heisuke-kun, is there something wrong?"

"Oh, Chizuru. Hi." His usual happy-go-lucky voice was replaced with a solemn one, which bothered her greatly.

"Are you madâ€|or sadâ€|or anything?" she inquired.

"No, why would I be?"

\_Yeah, right. It's written all over your face. \_

Chizuru continued to stare straight at Heisuke, hoping she would reach him and he would start confessing, but he didn't. Instead, he avoided her gaze. "I have to go. I'll see youâ€|later?"

"Um," she was about to continue, but he had already pushed her aside and walked out the door.

\_So much for that approachâ€|\_

\* \* \*

><p>Lunch time came rather quickly and Heisuke was nowhere in sight. Starving from her lack of strength (thanks to gym class), she quickly made her way to Harada-sensei's office. He was already there waiting for her.<p>

"Let's go," he said as soon as he saw her coming.

Chizuru sighed. She just wanted to sit and relax a bit first, but she concluded that she could do that in the cafeteria too.

After buzzing through the crowded hallways, they finally made it to the huge lunchroom. \_The room could fill a whole country of people! ...Okay, that was exaggerated, but wow. \_It was larger than any cafeteria she had ever seen. Inside, people chatted loudly, as expected. No one seemed to stare as she started lining up.

"So, how is it?" Harada-sensei surveyed.

"Big."

"And?"

She thought for a moment. "Grand." No kidding. The red window curtains were drawn back to let light in and there was a strip of matching red carpet that ran along the centre of the room, splitting the cafeteria in half. At the front, wide counters stood. Behind the counters were a few staff members who were managing the sales and orders. The walls were covered with light golden wallpaper, and Venetian styled poles stood in various spots. The ceiling was high and the area large, but the whole room was lit by large chandeliers.

Harada-sensei smiled from beside her. "What do you feel like having? You can order anything."

Automatically, she scanned the menu for the cheapest thing.

"Don't feel limited to the cheap things. I really don't mind."

"I don't want to be a bother and I don't really like to owe people," Chizuru reasoned. Then again, she's already stolen his lunch period away from him. What more is a few bucks?

She looked at the menu on the screenâ€¦\_Maybe there's something cheap up there?\_...to see that the cheapest thing was anything but cheap.

"Uhâ€¦|Harada-sensei, when you said that the prices were off the chartâ€¦|" she started.

"Off the chart for other people maybe, but don't worry. I don't have a job for nothing."

\_I don't think whether you have a job or not is the matter hereâ€¦|\_More like what \_kind\_ of job you have.\_

"Oh, I see." She hoped she sounded understanding enough. "Then I'll haveâ€¦|uhâ€¦| combo A?" She saw him look at the menu.

"Uhâ€¦|if that's really what you want. As I said, I \_really\_ \_don't\_ mi-"

"No. Combo A looks delicious!" It was true that combo A was the cheapest thing on the menu, but according to the photo, it looked filling enough. Although what the food was, she couldn't tell.

As Harada-sensei ordered their food, Chizuru continued examining the cafeteria. That was when she noticed Okita come in.

Okitaâ€¦ She had completely forgotten about him!

"\_I love you." \_

That's what he said yesterday. He was probably joking, right? He couldn't have been serious! \_I mean, I barely know him!\_

\_You barely know him, but he knows you real well,\_ an inner voice told her.

As she pondered over this, their food arrived. Chizuru didn't know what it was, but it looked tasty enough. "Thank you, Harada-sensei. Are you sure you don't want me to pay you back?" She felt really guilty. Besides, were teachers even allowed to buy lunch for students? She didn't think so.

"Think of it as payback for the past."

\_Payback for the past?\_ Could he be talking about the Yukimura family? \_But that wasn't \_me\_,\_ Chizuru wanted to scream. She lost her chance though.

"I have to go now. Enjoy your lunch!" With those words, her teacher left her alone in the cafeteria.

"Now where do I go?" she mumbled under her breath. She could stay here and eatâ€¦alone. That shouldn't be a problem. She'd been alone for such a big portion of her life. There shouldn't be any problem with being alone now.

However, after eating with everyone, being alone now felt like such a waste. It didn't feel right anymore. Suddenly, she was that much lonelier.

\_Maybe I can find Heisuke? Unless he still plans to avoid meâ€¦\_

\_Okita? â€¦I think it'd be awkward. \_

\_Saitou? Yamazaki? \_Either one sounded great right now.

Then she remembered Kazama. Was she supposed to eat with Kazama? She didn't know anymore. The last few times, he had allowed her to eat with her friends. Would he chase her away again?

\_I'll take my chances. \_Who knows? Maybe he's got some tasks for her to do.

With that thought in mind, she headed towards the student council office with as much positivity as she could muster up. Knocking lightly, she allowed herself entry.

Kazama was there, along with Shiranui and Amagiri. They all seemed to be in a foul mood. Were they still arguing about this morning?

At her appearance, Kazama's head tilted up. He didn't say anything about her lunch tray, and only nodded in the direction of the tea

table.

She took it as a signal to sit on a couch and eat on the tea table. Avoiding Shiranui and Amagiri's gazes, Chizuru quietly walked over to the table and sat down. Should she start eating? The atmosphere's kind ofâ€¦suffocating.

No one was speaking, and everyone was crossing their arms in front of their chests, sending glares in every direction. A lump formed in her throat. She gulped it down and stared down at her food.

"Kazama-sama, would you like some?"

He snorted. "Why would I even go near the cafeteria food?"

"Oh, but isn't this school \_yours, Kazama\_? Shouldn't the food be to your taste?" Shiranui spat.

Amagiri sighed, shaking his head in disapproval.

"The school isn't mine specifically," Kazama lowered his eyes before closing them in frustration.

"Then why is it called Kazama High?" Shiranui continued.

"Ask my grandfather that," he snarled.

"So now you're just ignoring my question?"

How these two could make an argument out of anything, Chizuru wasn't too sure. They were pretty childish, that's all she knew.

Unable to handle the heavy atmosphere, she spoke up. "It'd be nice if you guys could get along."

Everyone's heads whipped her way. They were all staring at her, wide-eyed.

"What?" She asked, dumbfounded. Was it something she said?

"Get along?" Shiranui practically laughed. "Did you hit your head?"

She didn't get it. "I mean, you guys are in the student council with one goal in mind, and it's the same goal for all of you. Don't all three of you want to make this school a better place?" Isn't that why they joined the student council?

At this, Shiranui actually started laughing. "Listen, kid. You're the son. You have the least experience, so don't start talking like you know everything."

Amagiri continued on for him in a much more pleasing manner. "We weren't elected into the student council. I'm sure you are aware of this." Now that she thought about it, she was never exactly elected either. She was just told to join. "Since Kazama-sama is the grandson of the first principal of this school, and the son of the second principal, the role of student council president was automatically given to him.

"Since Shiranui and I are relatives of the president, we were immediately chosen to be the vice president and treasurer. You, who have a relationship of some sort with the president, was chosen to be the secretary. Does that make sense?"

\_Yes, yes it does.\_ "But that isn't right! There are \_actual\_ students out there who \_want \_to be of help to the school!"

"Son, are you saying we don't want to help?" Shiranui's eyes narrowed into slits.

"Shiranui, \_you're\_ the one bringing weapons to school," Kazama commented.

"I do that so the students know what not to do. I'm a bad example. That's my way of leading," Shiranui practically boasted.

Chizuru rolled her eyes. \_What's there to brag about? \_

She sighed. Thinking on it more deeply, she thought, i\_sn't it still unfair? Just because Kazama's the son and grandson of the previous principalsâ€|\_ "Wait, so who's the principal now?"

"My father," Kazama stated flatly. Was that a sign of irritation in his voice?

"Technically, it's this guy's father, but the guy's a big lazy jerk, so he gets Kondou-san to do it for him. I don't blame him though. If I got stuck as the principal of a \_school\_, I'd be sick too. Hey, Kazama, I guess your old man's pretty slick!"

"Can people even do that?!"

"Of course," Shiranui responded as if it were the simplest thing in the world. "I'm not complaining though. Kondou-san's a pretty cool guy. He brings swords to school and starts swinging them around in his office when no one's watching. He's kind of my role model, ya know?"

Chizuru blinked. "How would you know that?"

"He \_thinks \_there's no one watching." Shiranui gave a mischievous grin.

\_Oh, brotherâ€|\_ Chizuru slapped her palm against her forehead.\_ So Shiranui likes spying on people? Oh, that's cool too, \_she thought sarcastically.

She noticed that the atmosphere seemed to lighten up a bit, so she started eating. \_Hey, this is pretty good!\_ \_ Who needs to buy all those expensive things when you got this? \_

Then again, even the cheapest item on the menu was still pretty expensive.

She made a mental note to thank Harada-sensei and pay back in whichever way possible later. She hated the idea of owing people, but Harada-sensei had insisted on treating her. She had to treat him back to something, but what?

It's not like she had a load of money or anythingâ€¦ \_Maybe I can help him grade papers or something?\_

"I've been meaning to ask, but how did you get that lunch?" Kazama's voice suddenly broke through her thoughts.

"Ohâ€¦ Harada-sensei treated me."

"Harada?"

"My homeroom teacher." Did he not even know the teachers of his own school?

"Right." Yeah, he totally didn't know him. "I'll pay him back later, so don't bother thinking about all kinds of strange things like working for him."

Chizuru dropped her fork. \_Ackâ€¦ how did he figure me out? \_

At Chizuru's shock, he smirked. "Just like a book."

\* \* \*

><p>"Any questions?" Hijikata-sensei asked -scratch that-demanded.<p>

The whole class gulped. "No," the students answered in unison. For some unknown reason, their math teacher appeared to be hastier than usual. Maybe he had a date or something after school. Whatever the reason was, Hijikata-sensei didn't seem to have any time to waste.

As soon as the bell rang, the students poured out. Since the last one out had to be the teacher, they didn't want to be scolded for being slow. Just when Chizuru was about to head out the door, a voice stopped her.

"Yukimura, stay."

She swallowed. It was Hijikata-sensei. "Okay."

As soon as the last student, aside from Chizuru, was out the door, she made her way to his desk.

"I'll be honest with you. Did Harada-sensei buy you lunch?"

\_Uhâ€¦\_ "Yes?"

His eyes narrowed dangerously. "Alright, you can go."

She nodded slowly and stepped out of the classroom.

\_That was it? â€¦.We're not in trouble, are we? \_When Chizuru read the freshman guide prior to her first day of school, she didn't come across anything about teachers not being able to buy lunch for students.

If she \_did\_ get in troubleâ€¦ she didn't want to think about it.



\_Time to head over to the student council! Again! \_

After school meant meeting Kazama in the student council and seeing if there was anything to do. If there was nothing, then that meant going home with Kazama.

Either way, her life revolved around Kazama, and he's made too much of an impact for her to change that.

\* \* \*

><p>"Did anything happen at school today?" Kazama asked as their ride rolled off of school property.<p>

"Why do you ask?"

He watched her for a few short moments, crimson eyes unblinking. "You seem to be worrying over something."

\_Am I that obvious?\_ Since he could read her like a book, she decided to just tell him what was on her mind. "You know how Harada-sensei bought me lunch?" He didn't say anything, so she continued. "Hijikata-sensei asked about it. I'm worried that he'll get in trouble." As the words left her mouth, she realized that Kazama probably didn't know who Hijikata-sensei was. "Never mind. You probabl-"

"Don't get too close to that Hijikata."

Her head tilted up. "Why?" \_He's my math teacher. It's kind of hard to avoid him. \_

"His stubbornness will rub off on you. Then again, you're a pretty stubborn brat already."

She blinked. \_He doesn't seem to like Hijikata-sensei too muchâ€|Hold on.\_ "What do you mean I'm stubborn?!"

He merely smirked as she pouted.

\* \* \*

><p>"Here, serve this to him," Rin handed a tray of light snacks, accompanied by tea, and lightly shoved Chizuru out the kitchen doorway. "Other than that, there's nothing else for you to do. Go do your homework or something if he lets you off."<p>

Chizuru nodded and headed towards Kazama's quarters, carrying the tray securely in her hands.

As she turned an abrupt corner, she nearly crashed into something â€"or someone.

"Sorry," Chizuru yelped as she not-so-skillfully dodged what would have been a messy crash.

"It's okay, Chizuru-chan."

\_Huhâ€|waitâ€|that voice sounds familiar. \_She looked up. \_If memory

serves me correctlyâ€|\_ "Sen-san?"

"I told you to stop being so polite, but yes, it's me. I'm glad you remember," Sen smiled.

"Um...Sen...-chan, how are you?" She wanted to ask what she was doing here, but that didn't seem appropriate. Why \_was\_ she here though?

"I'm fine, thank you. I hope you are doing well." Sen eyed her tray. "Are you perhaps heading to Chikage's room?"

'\_Chikage' againâ€|\_ "Yes. Ah! Thank you very much for last time. If you weren't there, I don't know how I would've found his room."

She giggled. "It was no big deal. I know this mansion inside out!"

'\_Inside out' she saysâ€|does that mean she comes often? \_"Hahâ€|I see."

She tilted her head. "You don't sound very happyâ€|why is that?"

"H-h-huh? Oh, no! I'm grateful! Really!"

"Hmâ€|is that so?" Her big, round eyes focused on Chizuru's for a second longer before she smiled once more. "That's fine then."

A few seconds passed by silently before she spoke again.

"Chizuru-chan, I want you to remember something. No matter what happens, I am your friend. I would never betray you."

\_It almost sounds like we've met before. I'm almost scared to ask, but if I don't, I'll never get any answers. \_"Umâ€|about that, Sen-chan. Have we met before?"

"Hm? Nope," she broke into a grin.

"Oh, thenâ€|" \_Next question. "A\_re you Kazama'sâ€|"

"His what?"

"Hisâ€|I don't know. What \_is \_your relationship with him?" She didn't want to seem desperate, but no matter how she looked at it, she did.

Sen's eyes widened a fraction before she laughed. It was a very feminine and controlled laugh, unlike hers. "Don't worry. As if I could ever love that guy."

Chizuru let out a breath she hadn't realized she'd been holding. "Oh, okay." Hopefully, she didn't sound too relieved or Sen would think she-

"You love him, don't you?"

"WHA-?!"

"Don't try to hide it. You've been engaged to him since you were born and you've spent most of your childhood with him. It's only natural for you to admire him. On the other hand, Iâ€¦" she trailed off.

"â€¦You?"

"Huh? Oh, it's nothing. Yep, it's totally nothing. I'll do something about it. Don't worry. Leave it to me; I'll take care of it!"

\_What is she talking about? \_"Take care of what? Would you like some help?"

Sen forced out a short laugh and patted her shoulder. "Don't worry. I'll come to you for help when I need it. For now though, the tea's cooling. You should hurry and bring it to Chikage! Don't keep him waiting. See you!" Just like that, she turned, waved, and left.

\_That wasâ€¦strange, but at least I know they're not dating! Waitâ€¦what am I thinking? \_She quickly shook away all thoughts and brought the tray to its destination.

"Kazama-sama," she addressed politely, just in case anybody was listening. After no answer, she looked around to confirm she was alone, and opened the door. The maids, not to mention his mother, would \_kill \_her if they found out she barged in without permission. Knowing Kazama though, he wasn't going to open the door for her, much less raise his voice to invite her in.

As expected, he was sitting at his desk, filling out something she wasn't sure of. Not like he had any homework to do.

"Kazama, I've brought your snacks."

"Leave them there," he pointed to the table in the centre of the room. "I'll eat them later."

"The tea will get cold."

"Serve it now."

She smiled. Snacks were one thing, but Kazama's tea had to be hot or else he wouldn't drink it.

He didn't look up from his paperwork. "Since when did you get back to calling me 'Kazama'? Don't you prefer calling me 'Chikage'?"

"You said to call you 'Chikage' when I wanted something from you. If you got too used to hearing 'Chikage,' I'm afraid you won't take it seriously anymore." \_Who knows, you might ask for more next time, \_she continued in her mind.

He grinned. Under his breath, he whispered, "aren't you clever?"

If only she knew that, coming from Kazama, it was a compliment and not just a sarcastic remark...

When no one spoke, and the only sounds in the room were the low

scribbling of his pen and the clumsy clanging of the teacups, he continued on. "Then what about that time at the cafÃ©?"

"When was that?"

"With that girl."

\_Shizuka? Ohâ€¦\_that\_ timeâ€¦\_ "I don't know what you mean."

"You know fully what I mean."

â€¦\_Demon.\_ "That was different." She refused to admit she liked calling him by his first name, no matter how bubbly it made her feel inside.

At this, Kazama nearly laughed â€"laughed! Just nearly though. "See? Stubborn."

"No, I'm not!" She rushed to his desk and smashed his teacup down. "Drink!"

"I like how gentle you are."

Was he being sarcastic? She didn't take him to be the sarcastic type, just the plain mean and sadistic type. \_Well, sarcastic works too, as long as it's accompanied by that dreamy smirk of hisâ€¦wait, what am I thinking of again?\_

"What are you working on?" she asked in an attempt to change the topic.

"Student council paperwork."

\_Oh, I guess being the president does have its toll on himâ€¦\_ Maybe he \_does\_ like being the president, since he's so focused and precise in his work.

"Don't even \_think\_ that I like being the president," he threatened, eyes darting from his work and back to her.

"Uhâ€¦yes sir!"

\_Sharp, he's sharp. He's as sharp as that pen he's using.\_

\* \* \*

><p>AN: Lots of love for reading!

#### Non-member Reviews

Aizawa Saki: ooo you've capitalized your first letters this time...sorry, couldn't help but notice. LOL That just shows you how much have an impact your reviews have made. ;) I'm sorry I updated so late! And this time as well! I SINCERELY APOLOGIZE orz. Hehe, I'm glad you liked that little family moment. And yes, to answer your question, Kaoru will be coming in the story soon. I don't know when though. :o Thank you so much!

~~~Thank you for reviewing!

## 23. Chapter 22

Bishie indicators...

>\*Kazama~~<br>That's it...

A/N: Really sorry for the late update once again!

\*\*Disclaimer: I don't own Hakuouki.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Chizuru was called for that night by none other than Kazama's mother. It was a surprising thing to be requested at such a late hour, but she was in no place to object. Without a clue on what was to happen, Chizuru made her way to the place indicated on the small note tucked in her pocket.<p>

The requested meeting place was anything but warm. The woman just had to set the meeting place outside. With the tree branches swaying so violently like that, one would consider this to be a very, very windy night. \_Does his mother hate me that much? \_Clad in the skimpy maid attire, Chizuru came dressed nowhere near prepared.

As soon as the woman in question was spotted, Chizuru's anger seethed. The woman was wearing layers and layers of clothing! Had she planned this all along? To freeze the poor girl out here where no one would figure out?

\_I'm just thinking about it too much. \_After all, it wasn't exactly his mother's fault that she hadn't come prepared. But the woman had established a meeting time and by the time she was done all her tasks and returned to her room, it was already well past it. Of course she had made a dash for it, and that explains why she was currently shivering in the cold.

"I'm very sorry I'm late!" Chizuru squeaked out, carrying out a low bow to show her apology.

The woman only clicked her tongue in a very Kazama manner before getting up from the bench she had been sitting on.

"I will ask you once. Do you really want to stay here?" she inquired, eyes digging deep into Chizuru's.

\_Well, if she asks it like thatâ€¦|\_ In the first place, Kazama was the one who had offered her a place to stay. Under the circumstances she had been given, she had no choice but to agree. But now, it's a different story. She's practically being forced to leave, but where would she go? She had no home anymore. If anything, the Kazama manor is her only home.

"Yes, yes I do," Chizuru said after giving it some thought.

"Then I will make myself clear. The only way I am letting you stay here is if you work it off, which you are doing right now. I have no complaints so far, but I \_will\_ be harsh on you. Do you believe you can handle that?"

\_Truthfully speaking: no. \_"Yes, I do. I will do anything

“\_anything\_, within my capabilities to stay here,” \_with him\_, she failed to add.

"Feisty, are we here?" For a second, Chizuru thought the woman had acknowledged her, but then, "Too bad I don't like it," she added dryly.

\_Of course not. She'll never like anything as long as it has something to do with me.\_ With nothing else in mind, Chizuru managed out a tiny "right."

\* \* \*

><p>Chizuru was never good with timing, but some days it was especially worse. Today was one of those days.<p>

"I was against it in the beginning, and I am against it now. The room was designed for your fiancée, not some petty \_maid.\_ What part of that do you not understand?"

"I understand every part well and clear, mother. That room was built for Chizuru."

"That girl is \_not\_ your fiancée anymore! Get that strange thought out of your uptight head! A mere week from now, Sen will be moving in. I want that girl out of that room by then. No, even earlier. We need to get the room disinfected first."

"Mo-"

"Kazama Chikage, I'm doing this for your future. You'll thank me later, I just know it."

That was all she heard before someone grabbed her arm and dragged her down the hall.

"S-Sen-chan?" Chizuru stammered.

"Hey Chizuru-chan," Sen chirped, sending over a cheesy wink. "How are you doing?"

"Uhâ€¦good I guess," if you didn't count that conversation she overheard a few seconds ago. "Just now, what were they talking about? I overheard your name too."

"Chizuru-chan! It's bad to eavesdrop!"

"Oh, you're right. Sorry."

Sen sighed and put her hands on her waist. "There's no use apologizing to me. Oh, but you shouldn't tell them about it either. His mom might cut off your neck!"

Chizuru gulped nervously and Sen giggled. "Just kidding! I eavesdrop too! Don't worry about it!"

\_No, I think it's still a bad thingâ€¦!\_

She gave a pat on her back. "Anyway, today I came to see you, Chizuru-chan!"

"To see me? What for?"

"I wanted to talk, but let's talk elsewhere," Sen whispered, hovering closer for effect. "It's kind of a private you see."

\* \* \*

><p>Chizuru found herself standing in the exact spot she stood yesterday night when she had talked to Kazama's mother. <em>Why am I back here again?</em>

"Is something wrong? You seem tired," Sen said, gently wrapping an arm around Chizuru's shoulders.

"It- it's nothing."

"If you say so."

"So what did you want to talk about?" Chizuru said as Sen urged her to sit down.

"I was wondering, do you like Chikage?"

She nearly choked on her saliva. She felt her cheeks flush and her temperature rise. "I-I'm sorry, what?"

"I just want to know whether you like him or not, but from that reaction," Sen smiled, "I can safely assume you do."

"H-huh? B-but I'm n-not really-"

"You heard it earlier, right? It was completely out of our control, but we're engaged, Chikage and I."

Chizuru's heart nearly stopped at that. She didn't know why, but a sudden wave of depression washed over her. Without a better response, she mumbled, "Oh, I see."

"But I don't like him one bit. In fact, you could even say I hate him. So I'm actually glad that you're willing to help me on this operation," Sen continued.

"I am? What operation?"

Sen grinned confidently. "I call it 'Operation Cancel-Our-Engagement-So-I-Won't-Have-To-Marry-Chikage-And-So-Chizuru-Will-Get-Him-Instead,' a.k.a. 'Operation Future' for short!"

"a.k.a. I see? Wait, what? So I can get him instead?" She couldn't believe what she was hearing. First, she was told that Sen was engaged to Kazama, and that got her depressed, but now Sen's willing to cancel that engagement? And the end result will be her engagement to him instead? Just what kind of operation was this?

"Chizuru-chan, I've seen you two together; you guys are a match made in heaven! As a child, I've met you two a couple of times and you were very kind to me whereas Chikage was just plain rude. I thought he was like that to everyone, but seeing him with you made me realize

that he really treasures you. I just want to help you right now," Sen said, ending her speech with a warm smile. "And while I help you, you can help me. It's a win-win situation, what do you say?"

Chizuru really wanted to help Sen, but she didn't see how that could lead to her marrying Kazama. \_Oh well, I should always help a friend in need. \_"Sure, why not. I'd love to help!"

"Great! So here's the planâ€¦!"

\* \* \*

><p>"Chikage, I want you to stop showing affection towards that Yukimura girl immediately and start spending your efforts on courting Sen. She is the one who will make you happy in the future." The woman's wrinkles seemed to increase tenfold as she made her command.<p>

"Anyone other than Chizuru is useless. You know that better than anyone, mother. After all, you've watched over us for years," Kazama smirked. He knew that his mother was rather touchy on anything of the past, especially on the happenings that occurred about a decade ago, or simply put: the Yukimura family's disappearance. He just couldn't fathom why though.

"It's true that she may have been the best choice for you when you were a kid, but times have changed. The Yukimura family has fallen and the runner up is Sen's family. As the heir of the Kazama family, it is your duty to marry into the rich with status." Her voice was strict and had a sense of finality to it, but Kazama did not back down.

"I would gladly abandon my duties to pursue a future with Chizuru." His voice was just as strict. Such was expected from him though. He \_was \_his mother's son after all. He had to have gotten his attributes from somewhere.

"If you do that, you will have no support from the Kazama family whatsoever."

His eyes gleamed dangerously. "\_I\_ am the one who will succeed this family after my father, but who are \_you\_?"

His mother was shocked and speechless, so he continued.

"You are \_not\_ in the place to tell me what to do."

"...It is true that I am not in the place to tell you what to do," the woman began slowly, "but the public will not like what they see if you mingle with her too much."

"So it's about image now?" He was rather interested in where this was going. An idea was already settling in his head. "Then let me make a proposal to you, mother."

"Oh?" His mother seemed intrigued too.

This would be easier than he thought.

\* \* \*



><p>"Shizuka, have you befriended her yet?"<p>

"Yes. Now are you happy?"

"Happy? How many times have I told you that I will never be happy as long as I am here with you?"

"You might have mentioned that a couple hundred times."

"Exactly. On another note, I have something else for you to do."

"Again?"

"It's your punishment for not being able to seduce that stupid man."

"He's a much better man than you are, brother."

"First of all, I am way better than him. Don't even try to compare me to him. Second of all, don't you dare call me 'brother.' I am not a part of your family, you understand?"

"Y-yes, sorry. Uhâ€¦ what was it that you wanted me to do again?"

"Oh yes. I want you toâ€¦"

\* \* \*

><p>"W-what? Sneak into his room at night?!" Chizuru shrieked, but quickly lowered her voice after Sen shushed her.<p>

"Yes. At night, no maids will be walking around. It'll be easy to talk to him then! Chikage will believe you more than he will believe me anyway. Our hatred towards each other is mutual after all. That's why I want you to sneak in at night and tell him about this operation."

"B-but-"

"I think I hear someone coming. For now, pretend like nothing happened and continue your work as a maid until the day of the event. On the day of, I will come meet you to discuss things last minute. Remember Chizuru-chan, don't tell anyone."

Just like that, Sen walked away. She was just in time too, because the next second, Rin emerged from the bushes. "Chizuru, what are you doing here? Get back to work!"

"O-o-o-of course! I'm on it!" Chizuru performed a quick bow before heading to Kazama's room. All this operation business will just have to wait.

\* \* \*

><p>"K-Kazama-san?" No response. "Chikage?" Still no response.<p>

She turned the doorknob and pushed open the door to find the room empty. \_Well so much for the tea I brought for himâ€¦\_

At night, she would have to meet him in his bedroom and discuss over everything with him. Her intentions, Sen's intentionsâ€¦but would she have to talk about her feelings too? She wouldn't have to if the situation doesn't demand for it. That was all she could hope for.

But was it really a secret anymore? They've already kissedâ€¦ did that mean that they were dating? \_No, no, no. \_This isn't a shoujo manga. Just because they kissed didn't mean they were dating. It was probably just on the spur of the moment that he decided to kiss her. It didn't mean anything.

It didn't feel meaningless either though. Her fingers unconsciously lingered close to her lips, not quite touching them. His lips were warm, she remembered. It was a long time ago, but she could still faintly recall the feeling of his lips on hers.

It was a nice feeling, she had to admit. Never to him though, but if the situation demanded for it tonight, she would have to confess. After all, it explained why she was willing to help Sen on this operation.

Her heartbeats were rapid in her chest and she felt her breathing hasten. It wasn't even nighttime, yet she was already nervous. What would she say first? What would she say next? What if she messed up? Was there even a need to tell Kazama about the operation? Well, he's involved, so obviously! But did \_she\_ have to be the one to tell him? And did it really have to be at night?!

She had so many questions and concerns, but no one to reassure her. Sen was already gone and there was no one else she could talk to. As close to a big sister as Rin was, Chizuru was certain that she could not tell the operation plans to Rin. She would probably get scolded for it anyway.

Sighing, she returned to the lounge of the mansion in search of another task that would hopefully get her mind off of Kazama.

But of course, that would be impossible since the whole mansion belonged to him.

\* \* \*

><p>The afternoon passed and the evening was a blur. Before Chizuru could help it, night was already here. The whole time, Kazama was not in his bedroom nor was he in his office. In fact, he didn't even seem to be in the mansion. She was starting to worry. What if she slipped into his room and he wasn't even there? She would look suspicious! Then again, even if he was there, she would still look suspicious.<p>

The lights dimmed, signaling that everyone should be in their rooms. After a few more minutes, the lights were completely off and the hallways darkened. Having the moon as her only source of light, Chizuru tiptoed down the hall. She found hope when she saw light coming out of Kazama's room.

She didn't knock for fear that people may hear. Turning the doorknob ever so slowly, she made sure to make as little sound as possible. Then, she slipped into the room.

Gently shutting the door behind her, Chizuru looked around the room for him. She didn't see him, but she did see the door to his bathroom open.

"Kazama-san?" she called out softly. "Where are you?"

"In here," a low voice called back. Following the voice, she stepped into the bathroom. "Kaz-" She quickly spun around. He was half naked, but the only thing that covered his lower region was a towel. "Why did you call me in here if you weren't dressed?!" she squeaked out.

"Quiet or someone will hear," he hushed. In truth, there was no need to be quiet. His room was completely soundproof, but in situations like this, it was better to talk in hushed voices. Talking loudly would simply ruin the mood.

Chizuru slapped her hands across her mouth and nodded. Oh, how gullible she was.

"So what did you want?" he asked while grabbing another towel to dry his hair. On second thought "Dry my hair for me." She was his personal maid after all.

Reluctantly, she took the towel from him and started dabbing at his golden locks. "I wanted to tell you something."

"Oh?" It was rare for Chizuru to have something to say. "Is it something so important that you had to come to my bedroom at night to share?"

"When he puts it like that" "Y-yeah. It is."

"Then I will listen." She couldn't see it, because the towel blocked it from view, but he was smiling.

"It's about your engagement with Sen."

She felt him tense up. His voice was tight as he questioned her. "Who told you about her?"

"I met her personally. She told me how she didn't want to marry you, because you're stuck-up and rude."

"Chizuru." He wrapped his hands around her wrists and pulled them away from his head. "If you only came here to insult me, I won't hesitate."

She tilted her head to the side. "Hesitate? To do what?"

He smirked just then. "To show you that I'm more than just stuck-up and rude."

Her face was blank for a second more. Then, she tilted her head the other way. "Are you trying to show me that you're worse than that?"

She was really missing the point here, but this could work too. "That's right. I'm mean, possessive, and dangerous too," he whispered huskily, lips grazing against her fingers ever so slightly.

It clicked to her just then. She tried taking her hands back, but he kept a firm grip on them. "Chizuru," he called out yearningly before standing up and pulling her towards the bed.

"W-wha-" she barely got to say before she found herself pinned onto the mattress. \_Why do I feel like I've been in this position before...?\_

"Chizuru," he said again. He kissed her fingertips gently before examining both of her hands.

"What is it?" He seemed to be deep in thought, but just what made her hands so interesting to look at?

"What kind of jobs have you done so far as a maid?" He pushed his cheek against her right palm before turning to it and kissing it.

"Uhâ€|" She tried to think but the feeling of his lips against her hand was too much to bear. "All I did was pour teaâ€| clean a little here and thereâ€|I think I had to carry some vases aroundâ€|There was this mess that I had to clean upâ€|uh-"

"What was the mess?"

"I think it was a wine glassâ€|I'm not too sure; it was already a mess when I got there." She saw no point in all this questioning. Just what was he hinting at? And how did she get into this position again?

"I see." \_Just what do you see?\_ "There are a few cuts on your fingers. Your hands used to be softer too."

\_Well thank you very much!\_ "You know, telling a girl she has rough hands does anything but score points. If anything, it deducts points," Chizuru deadpanned.

He chuckled a little before he released her hand. The next moment, she felt his hand caress her cheek. "You've always tried hard at everything, but the fact that your hands are rougher now just proves that you've been working harder than ever. I'm \_complimenting\_ you, Chizuru."

The way he said her name just now was so sweet, she couldn't help but blush a deep scarlet. Seeing this, he grinned smugly. "Falling for me even more now?"

She knew she would have to answer this question eventually, but right now? It was too early! She didn't know what to say, so she took this opportunity to relate back to her previous topic. "About that, Sen wants to cancel the engagement. She has a couple ideas which involve you and me."

Disappointed that she ignored his question just to bring up Sen again, he clicked his tongue. "\_Her\_ ideas? In that case, I've got a

couple ideas up my sleeve too, and I don't need any of you to get involved. I would rather pull through with my plans than her plans. Tell her to stop meddling and the engagement will be cancelled in no time."

"But-!"

He silenced her with a slender finger. "Do you believe in me, Chizuru?"

"Well, yes, but-"

"Then that's all you need to do. You don't have to worry about anything else."

He pecked her lightly on the cheek. It was short, but Chizuru still found it hot to the touch. Or maybe that was just her.

He sat back and took in her flushing face, amused but not quite satisfied. He wanted to do more, but was afraid of what would happen if he continued. Shaking his head, he mumbled to himself.

"When this is all over..."

\* \* \*

><p>AN: Thank you for reading! Looking forward to reviews!

Non-member Reviews...

I hope I'm doing this right... It's been a while since I've last responded to reviews, so I'm sorry if I missed anyone. D;

Dear\*\* Aizawa Saki\*\*: I'm so sorry for the long wait! . Yes, it's quite unfortunate that they had to separate, but they will meet up again.

~~~Thank you for reviewing!

## 24. Chapter 23

A/N: From now on, chapters will be noticeably shorter. I hope that consequently, updates will be more frequent.

Bishie indicators:

>\*Little Okita<br>\*Little Heisuke  
>\*Tiny bit of Yamazaki<br>\*Tiny bit of Saitou  
>\*No Kazama<p>

\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki. \*\*

\* \* \*

><p>"<em>Welcome, Chizuru-chan! Chikage is studying right now, but I promise you will be able to play with him once he's done," the familiar woman smiled. <em>

\_Chizuru felt herself smile back. "Okay, Auntie!"\_

\_Auntieâ€| She called her Auntie, but who was this "Auntie" of hers?\_

"\_So how's your mother lately?" the woman started. "I haven't seen her in a while. Is her business doing well?" \_

\_My mother's business? Why is this lady bringing that up?\_

"\_She's doing very well, thank you very much!" Her younger self didn't have the same suspicion she now had of the lady and instead, answered the question she had been given. \_

"\_That's good. If her business had suddenly failedâ€|" the lady cut herself short. "Oops! What am I doing, explaining things like this to a child. Ah, my son should be finished soon. Why don't we head over to his room together?" \_

\_Her son? So this woman was Chikage's mother?\_

\_Young Chizuru nodded her head, but just then, Chikage's mother's expression darkened. She grabbed Chizuru's arm and roughly pulled her out the door. "Don't you dare come back, commoner!" she roared, thrusting her on to the steps of the mansion. "Don't you dare show your face to my son!"\_

\* \* \*

><p>Chizuru woke, sweating and breathing hard. She had a dream about Kazama's mother. Unlike her other dreams, which consisted of memories only, this dream held elements of the present. That was a given though, since she had talked to the woman in question not long ago.<p>

Her first reaction was to get mad, but after pondering over it, she decided not to. In truth, she understood where Kazama's mother was coming from. If Chizuru was to put herself in his mother's shoes, she would feel the same wayâ€|Okay, maybe not.

She understood that his mother just wanted Kazama to have the best future for him, and she was totally not in that future. His mother wanted wealth and power â€"things she did not have. But she didn't have to be so harsh about it!

But she had found her answer, her conclusion. She would stay here, no matter what it took. Not only did she need a place to stay, but there was also a voice deep in her heart, telling her not to leave. If she left, Kazama will gradually become distant, and if that happens, her memories from her childhood will never come back.

Sen had told her yesterday that there was a chance she could stay here. There was something even \_she\_ could do. After going over the operation plans again, she gulped. Her task wasn't hard, but it sure wasâ€|embarrassing. And what's more, she had to tell Kazama about itâ€|

\_Hold onâ€|I didn't get to tell him about it yesterday!\_ She had visited his room to tell him her intentions, but he had distracted her and in the end, she never got the chance to tell him about them! He told her to simply believe in him and everything would be fine,

but she still felt like she needed to do something else.

With that thought in mind, she set off working on her part of the operation.

\* \* \*

><p>A while later, she found herself unable to think anymore.<p>

"I guess I should wake him up now."

Upon entering Kazama's room, she found the place empty. He wasn't in the bathroom either. She tried calling out, but after a couple unsuccessful tries, she found herself giving up.

She sighed. \_Where could he have gone to...? \_Walking down the hall, she bumped into Rin.

"Oh, Rin-san! Have you seen Kazama-sama?" "I think he left already. Since you have nothing else to do, you can eat and go to school," Rin replied.

\_He left already? \_...\_Without me? \_was her next question, but she reasoned that there were more important things to be worried about.

\* \* \*

><p>After getting a ride from one of the other chauffeurs, she arrived at school. Once again, Kazama was nowhere in sight, even after looking for him in the student council office.<p>

"He's not here yet," Amagiri had stated.

"Looking for daddy? Is mommy not enough for you, sweetie?" Shiranui cooed.

Chizuru merely smiled and bowed before exiting the room, leaving the man's question unanswered.

\* \* \*

><p>"Hey, uh...Chizuru."<p>

She turned to the direction of the voice. "Oh, hi Heisuke-kun."

"You see, I, uh...I haven't been acting like myself lately..." He was fidgeting in his spot.

\_I can see that.\_ "Oh, I see. Is there something bothering you?" She turned herself to fully face him.

"I guess...I mean, no! There isn't! I have a favour actually."

"Sure, name anything!"

"Will you eat lunch with us again? It's been a while, and I think the guys really miss you." \_I miss you too,\_ he failed to mention.

"Of course!" Kazama wasn't here and she had made her own lunch today. After asking the staff if Kazama needed a lunch, they told her she didn't need to worry about him. She could visit the council room and tell them that she's eating with her friends. \_I'm sure they'll let. \_"I'd love to!"

\* \* \*

><p>When Heisuke had asked her to eat lunch with everyone again, there was a moment where she forgot who "everyone" was. But of course, "everyone" ended up including Okita.<p>

Kazama wasn't in his office, so it was only Amagiri and Shiranui. When Chizuru told them that she'd be eating with her friends, Amagiri had nodded in understanding, but Shiranui had more to say.

"What's wrong with eating with your mother?" After getting caught up a little, she found out that he was only kidding. He was surprisingly nice about it too, but then again, Shiranui was never a mean person.

"Find this chance to eat with your friends," he said.

She assumed "this chance" meant Kazama's absence.

When she reached the rooftop and saw Okita eating his lunch as usual, she felt her pulse quicken. She would admit that it wasn't in the same way her pulse quickened for Kazama, but it still quickened -in a nervous way perhaps.

Yes, she was nervous. How would she act in front of him? The last time she had seen him was at Heisuke's house, where he had confessed to her.

\_Great. How do I deal with this situation?\_

Okita patted the spot beside him. "It's been a while, Chizuru-chan." He smiled naturally. It was the same as she remembered it.

She sat down wordlessly and kept to herself.

"Why are you so quiet? It's been so long, so let's chat, like we used to."

"Um, alright." She unpacked her lunch and took out her chopsticks.

"Hmm, Japanese style today, huh?" Okita observed.

"Yes, I made it myself." She didn't want to brag, but she was pretty good at cooking. She didn't know where her skills came from though, considering the lack of groceries she could obtain in her past.

Perhaps she had unconsciously learned from watching the granny who had taken care of her in the past.

Chizuru-chan's homemade cooking looks good!" Heisuke practically drooled.



"I have to admit that it is quite a dish you've cooked yourself there," Saitou nodded.

"That does look good. Your cooking skills exceed my expectations, Yukimura," Yamazaki was deep in thought, then he jumped a bit. "Not to say that my first impression of you was that you were useless or anything."

She giggled. It felt like she hadn't done that in a while. "It's fine. You guys can have some if you want."

"Really? I call dibs first!" Okita was already poking his fork into her lunch box.

"No fair, Souji!" Heisuke complained.

"That's Souji-senpai to you!"

"Who would call you senpai? As if anyone would respect you for that!" Heisuke then tried to use his chopsticks to slide the piece of meat off the older man's fork. Okita was quick to react and fought back, successfully keeping the food on his fork.

"I'll kill you if you waste Chizuru-chan's precious cooking."

"Who said I'm wasting it?"

"If it's in your mouth, it's-"

"STOP! DON'T CONTINUE!"

Chizuru laughed at the exchange between her two friends. It's been a while since she's had so much fun.

It was at that point that she realized just how much she missed her friends.

\* \* \*

><p>Thank you for reading!<p>

Non-Member Responses...

Dear **\*\*Aizawa\*\*** **\*\*Saki\*\***: I would like a teacher like that too! It's always the good looking ones that you gotta be careful around! :o I'm glad! Thank you!

Dear **\*\*Stalianha\*\***:

>Chapter 21 - No, no, no! I'm happy that even though you were tired, you still read it. . Thank you! I will (hopefully) make everything clearer as the story progresses. :)<br>Chapter 22 - Haha, slug. I like the word you chose.

>Chapter 23 - Alright, I'll keep that in mind. Thank you. :) I'm so glad! Thanks! LOOL Yeah, Nasty Chizuru. :)<br>Thank you! See you soon too!

Dear **\*\*Olivia\*\***: I'm so glad you liked it! ^^

Dear **\*\*SlobberingBear\*\***: I'm so glad you liked it! Thank you so much! I really appreciate it! ^^

~~~Thank you for reviewing!

## 25. Chapter 24

A/N: I said frequent updates, but this isn't really frequent, is it?  
I'm sorry! orz

Bishie indicators:  
>\*No Kazama<br>\*Yamazaki

\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Chizuru wasn't especially clumsy or anything, but some days, she just wasn't the same.<p>

"Ow!"

"Chizuru-san!" Shizuka called out, immediately rushing to her side.  
"Are you okay?"

The girls had been running laps when Chizuru accidentally tripped  
â€œon nothing- and fell. "Yeah, I'm alright. Thanks," she smiled as she was helped up by Shizuka. Nowadays, Shizuka seems to always be around her. \_I guess it's her way of compensating for what she's done.\_

"Maybe you should go to the infirmary. I'll bring you there," Shizuka offered, wrapping Chizuru's arm around her own shoulders for support.

Chizuru nodded. "Thanks."

\* \* \*

><p>Upon entering the infirmary, the two girls were welcomed with silence.<p>

"Sensei! Sensei, are you here?" Shizuka called out.

"He seems to be out," Chizuru sighed. "I guess I'll just stay here. You can go back, Shizuka-chan."

"I don't mind staying here with you." She seemed like she really wanted to stay, but Chizuru thought it best to let her go back to class.

"I don't want you to miss class just because I got a foot injury." She still seemed reluctant so Chizuru continued on. "Don't worry about me; I'm fine already. I'll just wait for the school nurse to come back."

"Okay, if you say so."

After much convincing, Shizuka left. Chizuru was left in the empty infirmary, surrounded by the mysteriously clean, white walls. She remembered what Yamazaki had told her â€œabout how the school nurse

experiments on people. Although it was just a rumour, it still had Chizuru thinking.

She was currently sitting on a "surprise, surprise- perfectly clean, white bed. She looked at her surroundings once more and took things into detail this time. The cabinets look old, like they've been opened and closed countless times, but there are no signs of aging in the colour. The paint looked like it was freshly coated every so often. The beds, she understood. It'd be disgusting to see blood on a bed you were supposed to lie on.

Just then, the door slid open. "Sensei!" Chizuru greeted nervously, standing up slightly to bow. \_Oh no, it's him! What if he locks me in here and experiments on me? I just sprained my ankle! That's all I did! I don't deserve this! I just want-\_

"Who are you calling 'Sensei'?"

She recognized that voice. "Yamazaki-san!" A sigh of relief escaped her lips.

"Yukimura" What is it now? Did I not tell you that being a regular visitor here is bad?" He sighed and walked over.

"I sprained my ankle during gym" And what about you? Don't you have class right now?" She watched as he grabbed the first aid kit and made his way over to the counter.

"A vase dropped and I got a nasty cut from it," he replied. "I don't want to get my blood on you, so I'll take care of your ankle after I treat my wound. For now, just sit there and try not to move too much."

She nodded and did as she was told. She watched Yamazaki as he skillfully treat himself. When he was done, he moved over to her.

"You know," Yamazaki started, "I didn't take you to be the clumsy type of person. It's your second time in the infirmary and it's only the beginning of the school year."

"Thanks," Chizuru deadpanned, sarcasm dripping from her voice.

"Don't take it in a bad way; I was merely saying what was on my mind."

\_It's hard not to" \_

"Is there something on your mind? Is that what's causing your clumsy behaviour?" He asked, voice slightly grazed by concern.

"Nothing in particular"

"Is it about the president?"

\_Whoa! Where did that come from?\_ "No! Why would I-"

"He isn't here today, so I figured something wrong may have happened to him," Yamazaki said matter-of-factly. "Kazama barely misses

school, so when he does, the whole school talks about it."

"Ohâ€|" \_That would explain why the girls in her class were so chatty today. \_"I see."

"So is it?"

"Is it what?" she blinked.

"Is it about the president's absence? Is that what's affecting you today?"

She paused. Was it? It wasn't like she had been thinking about him at all today. "No, I don't think so. I completely forgot about him actually."

"Perhaps it's the fact you've forgotten about him that is making you so uneasy," Yamazaki mumbled as though he was in deep thought.

"Pardon?"

"It's nothing. Here, you're all done." He released her ankle and cleaned up the supplies as she carefully tested out her foot. She winced as she felt the pain again.

That earned her a look from Yamazaki. "It's not going to get better right away. I thought it was obvious, so I didn't tell you to be careful, but I guess I should have reminded you."

"Rightâ€|" She laughed nervously in embarrassment. \_Seriously, what's gotten into me today?\_

\* \* \*

><p>She thought she would have to walk home alone today, since Kazama wasn't with her, but to her surprise, she found the chauffeur standing outside of the same limousine she rode to school in.<p>

"Do you know where Kazama-sama is?" she asked the chauffeur as soon as she was in the vehicle.

"No, I do not."

She squinted at the man through the rear-view mirror. "Really?" She found the man's squirming behaviour unsettling. "Are you lying to me?"

After a moment of silence and sweat (from the chauffeur, of course), he replied. "Yes, I am. In truth, I know where he is, but I cannot tell you, miss."

She sat back down and relaxed, letting out a deep breath. "I see. I assume he ordered you not to tell me."

"Yes, I apologize."

"It's alright. It's not your fault." \_It's Kazama's fault.\_

Somehow, the chauffeur understood what she was thinking. "Please

don't blame the young master. Surely, he has his reasons too."

She examined the man some more, and found that this time he was not lying. At least she didn't think he was. "Yeah, I'm sure he doesâ€¦" If it was something so important that he had to skip school for, it better be a good reason!

\* \* \*

><p>She checked his room as soon as she got back to the manor. As expected, he wasn't there -or anywhere else in the mansion.<p>

"How am I supposed to be his personal maid if he's not even here?" she found herself muttering.

"You're free to do whatever you want then," a voice answered her.

Chizuru quickly spun around and was greeted by a hug. "Oof- Sen-chan! What are you doing here?"

"Checking how things are going on your end. So, tell me," she slapped Chizuru's back not-so-lightly. "How's it going?"

Chizuru held back a cough. "With what?"

"You know!" Sen leaned in. "With the plan!"

"Oh!" She mentally slapped herself. How could she have forgotten something so important? "Yeah, it's going well. I'm almost done."

"Good. Finish up your part! The big day's coming soon!"

Just then, they heard a familiar voice. "Chizuru!" She recognized that voice... \_Rin-san? \_

"Oh, dear. I can't get caught here," Sen whispered. "I have to go now. The big day's in three days. Make sure to finish by then!"

Chizuru nodded quickly as Sen made her escape.

\_I wonder why Sen has to be so sneaky about everything...\_ She dismissed the thought though, because courtesy to Rin, she now had tasks to do.

\* \* \*

><p>Thank you for reading!<p>

Responses to non-member reviews~

Dear **\*\*Stalianha\*\***: I'm so sorry for the late and short updates! . I'm really happy that you're still following this story even after all my tardiness! So thank you for your hard work as well! 3

Dear **\*\*SlobberingBear\*\***: Yes, shorter chapters but faster updates... but I have to say that I'm not updating much faster. :( I'm sorry!

~~~Thank you for reviewing!

## 26. Chapter 25

Sorry for the super late update! .

Bishie indicators:

>\*Teesy Weensy bit of Kazama<p>

\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>The days passed by like a blur. Before Chizuru knew it, it was already the day of the big event. Kazama must have been hibernating or something, because she couldn't even remember when she last saw him. It was as though he had shut himself in his room during school hours and locked himself up somewhere else when she got home. As strange as it was, Kazama was nowhere in sight.<p>

Of course, when she had asked the other maids where Kazama was, they had all said "he's busy" or something like that. She doubts they were lying, but what could possibly keep Kazama so busy to the point where he was practically missing in action?

She rid herself of all these thoughts and hoped for the better. \_I'm sure to see him today. I mean, it's his birthday party!\_ That's right. Today was the Kazama heir's birthday, and a large celebration was scheduled to occur this evening. Guests from all sorts of companies and distinguished families were invited to this lovely event. As his personal maid, Chizuru was supposed to tag along and follow where ever Kazama went, but judging on the current circumstances, finding the young master in the first place would be a challenge.

All the other maids are in charge of serving food and helping the event run smoothly, but by the looks of it, Chizuru might end up with that job as well.

It was a warm, Saturday evening. Guests began to pour in at exactly 6 PM. It wouldn't take long before the lobby of the mansion to be filled, so the maids and other staff invited the visitors into the main banquet hall. Amazing displays of food were placed on little tables, which spotted the room here and there. As much as Chizuru wanted to look at the food and sneak one up her sleeve, she had a job to do.

She looked around. No Kazama in sight. \_Where could he be? Shouldn't he be welcoming all his guests? \_She found herself searching to no avail. As big as the room was, surely Kazama couldn't be completely invisible to the naked eye. Just then, she spotted a blur of blond â€"the same dirty blond as Kazama's hair. She turned around, but it was gone. She wanted to scream out his name, but that would put all the embarrassment and shame onto her.

Sighing, she walked in the direction she thought she had seen the young master go to.

"Chizuru-chan!"

Turning around, she found herself facing Sen. As usual, Sen was dressed in a kimono, but this one appeared to have more details. She was wearing makeup as well.

"Sen-chan! I'm so glad I found you! I can't seem to find Kazama-sama anywhere!" She almost hugged the fancily dressed girl, but stopped herself short. \_Not in front of these guests.\_

"Never mind that!" She waved Chizuru off and grabbed her arm. "Come with me; I've prepared a dress for you!"

"A dress?"

"Yes! Don't worry; I picked the right colour. It's absolutely stunning! You'll look fabulous in it!"

"The colour isn't the problem! Why do I need to wear a dress?" Her maid attire was enough. Besides, she wasn't a "guest." She never received a formal invitation to this event. It was her work position that gave her the right to be at this party.

"You are \_not\_ going on stage with \_that\_! As cute as it is, you can't look like a maid up there," Sen scolded, already pulling the confused girl away.

"B-but-"

Her cries were lost as Sen dragged Chizuru into her room and threw the dress on her.

\* \* \*

><p>"So I was saying how you were so busy these past few days. I thought you had completely forgotten about your own birthday party! My, I was so happy when I received your invitation," a woman in her early 40's chatted, sipping at the glass of wine in her hand.<p>

"I have been quite busy lately," Kazama hummed.

"With what, if I may ask?" a nearby man joined in.

Kazama chuckled just then. "You will just have to wait and see, my dear guests."

\* \* \*

><p>"You look great, Chizuru! I knew white would look good on you!" Sen cheered happily, clapping her hands together.<p>

"I- I appreciate you doing all of this, but I don't need this," she motioned to the dress and new hairstyle Sen had given her, "to go on stage."

Sen placed her hands on her hips in a scolding position. "Yes you do! Now, time for jewellery and makeup!"

"No! This is enough, really!" Chizuru protested.

"Hm, you're right. You're pretty enough without makeup and jewellery. Okay, maybe just this neckla-"

"No, it's fine! Really! Thank you, Sen-chan. I'll give this dress back to you after, so let me have a little time to get ready." She began pushing Sen out of her room.

"You don't have to return it. It's a gift!" she chirped.

"It looks so expensive though. I must do something in return then," Chizuru said. After all, she really didn't like owing people, especially when it was such an expensive gift.

"Don't worry about that. I used Chikage's money to buy it. I asked him for money two days ago when he asked me for a favour." Sen smiled innocently as though there was nothing wrong with what she had just said.

"What? You saw Kazama-sama?" But everyone else she had asked said that he was too busy to talk!

"Yeah, he asked me to recommend him to the CEO of some company. It wasn't anything top secret, but business is business! So in return, I asked for money to buy your dress!"

"I see." She tried to register what Sen had just said, but she couldn't understand what that had to do with him having gone missing.

"I'm going to go and leave you to yourself now. I'll see you later, okay?" Sen patted her back reassuringly and left.

Left alone to think, Chizuru stared at her reflection in the mirror.

\_I'm going to do this, and I'm going to do this right. \_

She didn't know why she had gone with Sen's "Operation Cancel-Our-Engagement-So-I-Won't-Have-To-Marry-Chikage-And-So-Chizuru-Will-Get-Him-Instead" - "Operation Future" for short, but she did. It was too late to go back. It was originally to help Sen get out of her engagement with Kazama, but was she doing it for herself too? So she "will get him instead," as the operation name suggests?

She just didn't know anymore.

\* \* \*

><p>"Welcome, everybody, to my son's birthday party! I thank you all for coming. My son will be with us shortly, but I would like to say a few words of gratitude before he comes up on stage." It was undoubtedly Kazama's mother who was speaking into the microphone. Her figure on stage was stunning, even at her age. She wore a Venetian red dress that hugged her body so well that you would assume she was a model in her early 20's. When on stage, she hogs everyone's attention and nobody can look away from this beautiful woman.<p>

"My son is already at the age where he can make his own decisions. As you may all know, his father is aging. The family business will be



handed off to our son, and my only wish is for him to lead the family well. His father was a great leader and CEO, and I'm sure Chikage will be as well. I hope that he will continue to be healthy and strong, just like his father. Many thanks to all those who came to celebrate his birthday with us. We are very thankful. Without your support, my son may not have grown into what he is today. I hope you will continue to look after my son in the years to come. Thank you."

Everyone clapped, even Chizuru. No one heard though. No one saw, for she was hiding in the shadows, afraid to make an impression, afraid to speak out and grab everyone's attention.

\_I need to speak up â€"now! \_

She urged herself, but her body was frozen. Her feet might as well have been glued to the ground, because she could not move. She must be sweating right now. Good thing she hadn't worn any makeup, or it may have smudged.

Her hair, which was curled into slight waves, were a nuisance to her at the moment. It was a big change from the straight hair she normally kept in a pony tail. Perhaps she could clip her bangs with the white barrette Sen had put on her. At this moment, it was only used as decoration. Maybe she could take it off and clip her bangs up with it...

She moved to remove the barrette, but she remembered what Sen had told her.

"\_Don't touch your hair!" \_

"Why, Sen-chanâ€|" she whined softly.

"At this point, I would like to call my son on stage," Kazama's mother suddenly announced.

\_Oh no, I have to speak up now!\_

"Please put your hands togetherâ€|"

\_Speak up, Chizuru! Speak up!\_

"â€|forâ€|"

\_\*\*Speak up!\*\*\_

"â€|Chi-"

"WAIT!"

Everyone spun their head towards her. Their attention was on her. She gulped nervously under everyone's gaze.

\_Great. Now what do I do?\_

\* \* \*

><p>Thanks for reading!<p>

## Responses

Dear \*\*LuckyLucy\*\*: Yes, I'm so sorry about that, but believe me. Kazama has a plan of his own. Sen's quite smart, so you'd be surprised. :) Thank you for reading! :D

Dear \*\*SlobberingBear\*\*: Your review really made my day. I'm happy that my updating has made your night better! :) I am working on it now!

Dear \*\*Stalianha\*\*: Haha, don't worry about it. You're not exaggerating at all. She is quite an eyesore, but every story needs one of those girls. :) I have something planned for Okita in the next chapter. ^^ And Kazama will come back soon! Thank you for reading!

~~~Thanks for reviewing!

## 27. Chapter 26

As always, I apologize for the long wait!

Bishie Indicators:

\*Little bit of F4  
>\*KAZAMA. OHHH YEAHHH.<p>

\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>"Hey Souji, let's go get some food!"<p>

"Stop being a pig, Heisuke. We have to find Chizuru first."

"What did you just call me?"

"A pig. Got a problem with that?"

"Yes! You wa-"

"Would you two stop being so childish at someone else's birthday party?"

The two heads turned to glare at the third person who had joined them, but it turned out to be Kazama.

"Kaz- What are you doing here?" Heisuke blurted out.

"It's my party. Why else would I be here? You're not very bright, are you?" Kazama smirked.

"That's not what this twerp's asking. He means to ask where you've been all week," Okita answered for Heisuke.

There was a change of tone in Kazama's voice. "Are you interested?"

Apparently, his tone pissed Okita off, because he scoffed and looked

away. "No."

"But I a-" Heisuke said, but was cut off by Okita's punch in his face.

Kazama seemed disgusted by the two. "I have something to do now." He turned to leave, but stopped and turned back, a smug smile on his face. "And try not to get blood on the floor. I don't want my poor Chizuru to be the one to clean up your mess."

At that, both Okita and Heisuke's expressions grew grim.

"Let's go find Chizuru," Okita said after Kazama was gone.

Heisuke nodded. "For once, I agree."

The two began to look around, but to no avail. The Kazama manor was big, but it couldn't be that big! How hard was it to find one girl in a room? She had to be here somewhere.

Their search was interrupted when a woman's voice sounded over the speakers.

"Welcome, everybody, to my son's birthday party! I thank you all for coming." It was Kazama's mother speaking.

"Great. Now we have to look interested or they're going to kick us out," Okita sighed.

"It's strange that we were invited in the first place," Saitou joined the group, holding a glass of ice water.

"It's very likely that his mother was the one who had invited us," Yamazaki spoke from his position beside Saitou. "The president himself would never invite us."

The three boys had to agree on that. They all knew that Kazama was not very fond of them. And ever since Chizuru befriended them, his attitude towards them had only grown worse.

The boys continued to listen to the woman's rather fake speech. After she finished, everyone applauded, even them. If they hadn't, they would have stood out like a sore thumb. Attracting attention was not necessary in a banquet like this.

"Shall we look for Yukimura-san?" Saitou suggested.

"We've tried. We couldn't find her anywhere," Heisuke replied.

"She shouldn't be too hard to find. Since she's working here, she should be in work attire," Yamazaki contributed.

The boys looked around. A few maids and staff members could be seen here and there, but no one looked like Chizuru.

Suddenlyâ€|

"WAIT!"

Everyone turned to look at the source of the voice.

"That sounds like Chizuru," Heisuke commented. "Let's go take a look."

\* \* \*

><p>Everyone had their eyes on her. They were all watching her every move. One mistake and it would be over.<p>

She gulped nervously again and spoke, quieter this time as everyone's attention was already on her. "Wait...I have something to say."

Without waiting for an invitation to do so, she proceeded towards the stage, her heels clacking against the hard floor. Everyone was silent as they watched her walk up to the beautiful woman on stage.

Although the stage didn't have special lighting or anything, she felt the temperature change around her. It seemed hotter and she started to sweat. Kazama's mother wasn't sweating though. Maybe the temperature change was just her.

"What is it that you have to say, my dear?" his mother asked politely, a big difference to the harsh tone she would normally use with her in private.

"Before Kazama-sama comes up on stage, I have something to say," Chizuru replied as bravely as she could.

"I asked you \_what\_ you have to say." She started to sound impatient, but caught herself before her mask slipped off completely.

Chizuru chose her words carefully. "You will hear it in a second, if you allow me to speak in front of this audience."

Kazama's mother contemplated for a while before sighing and handing the microphone to her. "Very well. Entertain me with what you have to say."

The woman stood back, but she did not step down from the stage. Chizuru assumed she wasn't going to leave the stage and she was glad for it, because being up on a stage by yourself was pretty nerve wrecking.

Slowly, Chizuru turned towards the audience. She noticed Sen off to the side, giving her the thumbs up. Chizuru took a deep breath, returned the gesture, and spoke into the mic.

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen and welcome to my master, Kazama-sama's annual birthday party."

At this, the audience buzzed among each other with confusion. Chizuru felt the need to clarify her position.

"I am the young master's personal maid, Yukimura Chizuru." Gasps ensued, but the audience stayed quiet for her to speak. "I understand that it is quite rude of me to present myself without my maid attire," she stole a glance at Sen, "but I felt it less appropriate

to present myself in work attire than it is in a dress, is it not?"

The audience seemed to agree as a group, but one man spoke up.

"What's the daughter of the Yukimura family doing here? I thought all of you disappeared!"

Chizuru had an urge to yell back, but she fought against it. That would just tarnish her reputation "if it wasn't already tarnished enough.

"I have been working under the Kazama family ever since they took me in. I am very pleased with the care they have given me." Smooth. That was the way to handle people like him.

"How do we know you aren't doing anything suspicious?" The man questioned.

"I am not. Please don't associate me with the kind of people who would."

"Who knows? You could be trying to wrap the family's son around your little finger and bend him to your will for all we know!"

"I would do no such thing!" Her voice had risen without her consent. She swallowed again. Now seemed like a bad time to bring up her proposal. If she did, it would sound exactly like what the man had just accused her of doing!

Chizuru looked at Sen, who looked like she was ready to pounce on the man and knock him out real good. She somehow found the will to calm down though and spoke loudly for everyone to hear. "Chizuru is not that kind of person!"

Everyone turned to Sen and whispers came flying all over the place.

"Hey, isn't that Kazama-sama's fiancée?"

"She's the one that is engaged to the young master!"

"What a beautiful lady she is."

Then realization dawned on everyone. "What is the heiress of such a prestige family doing, defending a mere maid?"

"Chizuru is not that kind of person," Sen repeated. She walked determinedly up the stage and stood alongside Chizuru.

"I came here today not only to celebrate a birthday, but also to speak my mind."

The audience was silence, because it was Sen speaking after all.

"I wish to cancel my engagement with Kazama Chikage." Gasps were heard across the room, as expected. "And in my place, I recommend Yukimura Chizuru to be his fiancée."

More gasps ensued as heads swirled to look at Chizuru.

"I may not have the wealth, nor do I have the status, but—" Chizuru paused. This was it. This was the truth she had mustered up these past few days. She would say it, in three words. "I love him."

No one spoke a single word. Everyone just stared at her, as though they were contemplating over whether to approve of all of this or not. Chizuru took this chance to continue, remembering what Sen had told her the other day.

"\_Chizuru, you have an advantage that no one else has," Sen whispered, putting a reassuring hand on her shoulder.\_

"\_And what is that?\_"\_

"\_You \_know\_ him. You knew him way before I did. You always had a special place in his heart. In his mind, you cannot be compared to. The only one he opens his heart up to, Chizuru, is \_you.\_" \_

She could only hope that she wasn't making a big mistake as she continued. "I love him, and I—" she stuttered. "I think that he loves me too! So—" \_Oh no, I don't know what to say next,\_ Chizuru panicked.

Suddenly, laughter was heard from beside her. She recognized this voice.

Chizuru turned her head around and came face to face with a very familiar man. "Kazama-sama!"

He continued to chuckle as though what she had just said was amusing. "Chizuru, you're great," he whispered in his deep voice after he was done. "Now let me handle this."

He turned to the audience.

"Greetings. I am Kazama Chikage, heir to the Kazama household. I appreciate you all for coming to this special event."

He seems different from how he usually acts. \_He's really professional when he acts like this,\_ Chizuru admired.

"I had not planned for this to happen," he continued, "but since it has, let me announce something at this very moment." The guests listened carefully, because they all felt that what came next would be very important.

"As all of you may already know, my previous fiancée was this young lady over here," he gestured over to Chizuru. "We all know her as the hardworking girl she is: top scores, great at housework, and very kind."

"She \_does\_ sound very hardworking," a man near the front whispered. He wasn't very good at it though, because Chizuru had caught his words, quite happily to say the least.

"We met each other when we were very young, and we understand each other quite well. Due to certain circumstances however, our engagement has been cancelled, but now I am glad to have her back.

She fits in very well here at the Kazama manor, and with the permission of my current fiancée," he looked at Sen who nodded her head in return, "I ask Yukimura Chizuru to continue to stay here in this house not as a maid, but as my fiancée."

The audience seemed to really like Kazama's speech just now as they were all clapping and cheering, but Chizuru didn't understand what he had just said. She spent a few moments looking at Kazama's outstretched hand.

\_Wait! What just happened? Did he just propose to me? \_As questions continued to swirl around in her head, Kazama tsked.

\_She doesn't expect me to go on my knees, does she? This woman! \_Even though his thoughts said one thing, his body said another, and he found himself on one knee before her.

"I ask you again, Yukimura Chizuru. Will you take up from where you left off and renew your position as my fiancée?"

This time, Chizuru heard. "W-wha? I, um! I."

"Just say yes already!" Sen urged. "You're making him wait!"

Even the audience was hyped up, and they all waited eagerly for Chizuru's reply.

Just then!

"I don't approve of any of this."

It was, of course, Kazama's mother.

\* \* \*

><p>Thank you for reading!<p>

Responses

Dear \*\*Stalianha\*\*: My day school exams haven't started yet, but my language courses have. I am planning on updating soon! If all goes well, I hope to finish this series before my exams start. : \ Oh yes, I saw. It seems to be an action game though, and I suck at those haha. I don't plan on buying it, do you? No, don't worry. I'm just slow at updating. I think it might be too late to say this, but good luck on your exams!

Dear \*\*chikage38\*\*: Haha! That's adorable. :) It makes me so happy that you liked it so much, so thank you! Yes, I apologize for my slow updates. .

Dear \*\*AnimeAishiteru\*\*: I will! I'm glad you like it! ^^

~~~Thanks for reviewing!

Bishie Indicators:

\*Lot's of Kazama ofc ^^  
>\*Little bit of Heisuke and Okita<p>

\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki. \*\*

\* \* \*

><p>"I don't approve of any of this." The harsh tone used to state these words was an unforgiving one. "I told you already. I don't want to waste my breath telling you again."<p>

Kazama's mother's previous kind and welcoming demeanor has been replaced by a cold and strict one. Nonetheless, Kazama was not fazed.

"And I told you in return that I would make a proposal to you," he retorted calmly.

"And what is it that you have done in these past few days? I have not seen any changes," his mother countered fiercely. "If anything, I would say you chickened out. You disappeared off to your own devices and barely came back here."

At this, Kazama smirked. "Clearly you haven't been paying attention to where your son has gone to."

"What?" the woman snarled.

"For the past few days, I've been contacting a lot of people." When his mother didn't speak, he continued. "Most of these people are CEOs of big businesses that the Kazama family currently works with. The rest are CEOs of other big businesses that have no affiliation whatsoever with our family."

"Elaborate," his mother said impatiently.

"Since you complained that image was the problem, I presented myself to these CEOs and made myself known as the next heir to the Kazama business. Some of these people are standing in this hall as we speak," he said, looking off at the crowd. A few people here and there nodded their head. "For those who weren't working with the Kazama family previously, they have now decided to "after I had a chat with them."

"So that's why you asked to meet that CEO," Sen realized out loud. "You wanted to do business with him?"

"Precisely. I wanted to expand the family business and at the same time, create an image for myself. One where I can make my own decisions. Mother, you cannot tie me down anymore. I can do whatever I want. I have gained the respect I deserve as the next heir of the family."

His mother was silent for a while before she finally spoke, albeit quietly. "What does talking to a few business owners here and there have to do with anything?"

Kazama smirked. "Everything. In order for a man to be well known in



society, he must have connections. I have created those connections now. I have created an image for myself. If a son of a prestigious family were to marry a not-so-prestigious girl, it would be looked upon with distaste. However, if the CEO of a wealthy business were to marry the same girl, the public would look at that in a different way."

"You do know you're betting on whether the public would find your engagement to her pleasant or not, right? It's very risky."

"I know they will find it pleasing. After all, I care for her deeply. I have made myself clear of that today. She has also stated her love for me, not my money. I assume there will be no further complications then?" he gestured towards the audience.

They all shook their heads, some more vigorously than others.

Kazama nodded with pride. "Mother, I have fulfilled your requirements. I will ask only one thing from you, and that is to give us your blessings in marriage."

His mother stared at him for a long time, but eventually sighed. "I guess there's nothing else I can do, so just do whatever you want."

Just then, Kazama did something strange. Something that even his mother hasn't seen in a while. He smiled with gratitude. His mother was shocked speechless and she could only stare at her son's newly found emotion.

He turned back to Chizuru and asked her once more. "So what's your answer, Chizuru?"

Caught off guard by her sudden cue to speak, she stumbled upon her words. "I- It's obvious, isn't it?" After all, she had already confessed "in front of the whole audience too!

The slight tug of his lips cued in his usual smug smirk. "Good." Bowing to both his mother and the guests, he pulled Chizuru along and left the stage. Everyone clapped and made way for the newly engaged couple.

\* \* \*

><p>"Since my mother approves of you, you won't have to work as a maid anymore," Kazama said all of a sudden as they walked past the crowd.<p>

"No, I am still grateful for all your family has done for me. The least I can do is work," Chizuru smiled reassuringly. "Besides, Kazama-san, you have so many work outfits for me! How could I just stop working as your personal maid?"

He seemed angry at that moment. "Stop with the 'Kazama-san' already. Call me how you used to call me."

"You mean Chika-chan?"

Kazama's eyes widened so quickly, she thought they would pop out any second. "You remember?"

"Just barely, but it's enough to believe everything going around me." Living in this mansion might have done more to her memories than she had predicted.

At the moment, Kazama was as happy as a child getting a new toy on his birthday. He didn't show it very much, but Chizuru could sense him brimming with joy. "I'm glad you remember my nickname, but aren't we a little too old for it?" he asked jokingly.

"Then, I guess I will just have to call you Chikage full-time now. No more hiding it."

"That will do," he smirked. He felt the need to kiss her just then. It was the perfect mood for it, so he leaned in, andâ€¦

"Hey, Chizuru!" Heisuke called out.

Kazama nearly punched the poor boy in his face, but Chizuru was here. And violence was too vulgar of an act for a sophisticated heir such as him.

"Oh, hi Heisuke," Chizuru grinned. "How are you?"

"I'mâ€¦fine." What else could he say after everything he just saw? The girl he loved confessing to another man, and the man doing the same back. It was a sight anyone would cry about.

"That's good." She seemed to be oblivious to Heisuke's hidden feelings though.

"Chizuru," another voice greeted. It was Okita. "Good to see you." His tone sounded casual on the outside, but was bitter on the inside.

She suddenly remembered Okita's confession and felt the atmosphere around them leaning towards the awkward side. "Okita-senpai, good evening," she gave the usual greeting in lack of a better one.

"So, how does it feel, being proposed to like that?" Okita asked nonchalantly. He was trying hard to create small talk. This, Chizuru could tell.

"It's," she blushed. "Umâ€¦"

Kazama watched the brief exchanges and sighed. He hated to leave Chizuru alone right now, but she needed to have a talk with her friends and he needed to go accompany his guests. "Meet me in my room after," he whispered in her ear, causing tiny shivers of excitement to go down her back.

"O-okay," she stuttered.

And then she was left alone with Okita and Heisuke.

\* \* \*

><p>Thanks for reading!<p>

Dear \*\*Anime Aishiter\*\*u: I'm glad you're hyped up! ^^

Dear \*\*Stalianha\*\*: Thank you! The next chapter will reveal it all! I think you are done your final exam now, so instead of saying good luck, I will say "good job!" :P

Dear \*\*Aizawa Saki\*\*: Yeah, I agree. I hope she will be better at the end. :) I will! Thank you!

~~~Thank you for reviewing!

## 29. Chapter 28

We getting mighty close to the end now, my dears~

>I changed up the way the narrator calls Kazama (Chikage now) to show how Chizuru calls him Chikage and not Kazama. I hope it's not too confusing.<p>

Bishie indicators:

\*Moderate amount of Chikage

>\*F4 is back!<p>

\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>The three of them stood in the shadows as the party continued on without them. The atmosphere was heavy, and Chizuru didn't know what to say.<p>

\_What do I do, \_Chizuru panicked. \_I've got to start a conversation topic of some sortâ€|!\_

"So nice weather we got today, huh?" Chizuru attempted.

"It started raining when we came here," Heisuke commented.

"Ohâ€|That'sâ€|nice." \_Idiot! Why did you bring up the weather? \_Chizuru mentally hit herself in the head.

Okita was still silent. He wasn't even making fun of Heisuke! This must be a new record.

"Um, so have you guys tried the food yet?"

"No, we didn't because Souji here wouldn't let me," Heisuke complained.

Still, Okita remained silent. Seeing this, Heisuke sighed. "Excuse us for a bit," he said, grinning sheepishly at Chizuru who could only nod in return. He then dragged the silent Okita away.

Once out of earshot and sight, Heisuke grabbed Okita's collar. "I know how angry you are, but don't go acting like that. It's selfish, you hear me? You were always the more mature one of us two, but look at you now. You're being a kid."

At this, Okita's expression changed into rage. "Don't speak like you

know how I feel!"

Heisuke punched Okita in the face just then. Placing a hand on his swollen cheek, Okita faced Heisuke with a puzzled expression. "I do," Heisuke mumbled. Then a little stronger, "I \_do \_know how you feel! I hold the same feelings as you after all. Now calm yourself. It's what's best for Chizuru. Let's just congratulate her and get it over with."

The boys stood staring at each other before Okita laughed loudly. "When did you become such a mature brat?"

"I was always a mature brat," Heisuke huffed. "And that punch, my friend, was payback for earlier."

"And I'm okay with it," he paused. "You know, we're both jerks."

"And idiots," a third party contributed. Both turned around and found Saitou and Yamazaki standing behind them. "You're both idiots," Saitou said again. "Your feelings are so obvious, it hurts to watch."

"I have to agree with you there," Yamazaki said, nodding.

"But weren't you interested in Chizuru too?" Heisuke questioned Saitou.

"There's a difference between interest and obsession," he handled the question wisely. "Now you guys should head back to Chizuru before she thinks you ditched her."

"You're right," Heisuke said, grinning. "You know what? No matter what happens, you guys will alwa-"

"Save the mushy talk. Let's just go," Okita cut him off.

\* \* \*

><p>"What took you guys so long? Oh, hi Saitou-san. Hi, Yamazaki-san," Chizuru smiled.<p>

"Greetings. Congratulations on your engagement," Saitou said.

"I wish you luck on whatever is to come," Yamazaki added.

"Thanks," she replied.

"Chizuru, let's be friends no matter what happens," Heisuke said all of a sudden.

Not knowing why the sudden change of topic, Chizuru responded with much confusion. "Umâ€|of course! We will always be friends!"

That stung Heisuke in the heart real bad, but he could deal with it. It was better than losing her completely.

"Uh..." Okita started. "Congrats about the...engagement."

Smiling, Chizuru thanked him. "Thanks. And I'm glad we've gotten over

theâ€|Anyway, I'm just really glad to have you back as a friend!"

Okita smiled kindly, which was a pretty rare sight. "Me too."

Then, Chizuru started fidgeting with her fingers.

"What is it?" Both Heisuke and Okita asked.

"...If you don't mind me asking, why are both your faces starting to bruise up?"

\* \* \*

><p>"To have my husband cheat on me with my daughter, that is so disgraceful!"<p>

"Shut it, Shiranui, or I'll kick you out," Chikage said.

"Haha, you wouldn't do that sweetie!" Shiranui teased. "You've taken me by surprise though. I didn't believe you would actually do that in front of everyone."

"You don't know me well enough then. And you call yourself my wife," he spoke sarcastically.

"Not my fault you don't tell me everything," he snorted.

"Congratulations, Kazama-sama," Amagiri said. Kazama nodded in gratitude.

"Now I was supposed to greet more visitors, but why am I stuck with you two?" Chikage questioned, eyeing his two companions with a threatening glare.

"You know having us here will make you feel better!"

"Would you like me to leave, Kazama-sama?"

"No, but if you do, can you take the bastard with you?"

"Yes, of course."

"WHO ARE YOU CALLING A BASTARD? HEY, KAZAMA! DON'T GO! YOU TRYING TO BE A CHICKE-"

\* \* \*

><p>He entered the dark room and closed the door behind him, shutting the loud noise from downstairs in a blink of an eye with his soundproof room. From his position, he could already catch her still form sitting on his window ledge. He made his way to her and she greeted him willingly.<p>

"Chikage, welcome back," she smiled as his face slowly came to view. His handsome features were highlighted by the moon's faint glow and she couldn't help but be mesmerized by him. Seeing him like this, she was vaguely reminded of the first time she had seen him at school, and how enchanted she was by his beauty.

"Say that again," he demanded quietly yet firmly.

She was lost in a daze, and didn't realize he had spoken to her until he sat down beside her. "Are you listening? I said to say that again."

He was leaning in closer and closer, and although it felt a bit uncomfortable at first, she sort of enjoyed his company.

"Um...Welcome back?"

"Before that," he whispered in her ear in his signature, husky voice.

"Chikage." She was more confident than she was before. He liked that.

"Nicely done," he complimented soothingly, caressing her right cheek. She leaned into his touch almost immediately.

They shared their moment in peace as they sat next to each other in silence. Feeling rather brave today, Chizuru leaned her head onto his shoulder and sighed happily.

"I'm glad," she whispered quietly.

"And why is that?" He was curious, but he also had an idea of what she would say next.

"Because you're next to me, and I can share these moments with you." She beamed up at him. When he didn't say anything in return, she lost confidence. "D-do you not feel the s-same?" she looked down.

"Let's kiss."

His sudden demand caught her off guard, and she was dumbfounded. "W-what?"

"Let's kiss," he demanded again, holding her chin up to look him in the eye. "We've done it before. Let's do it again."

"N-now?" She felt her face growing hot. She was blushing for sure.

The deep scarlet on her cheeks was not missed by him and he smirked as he felt the dominance in him take charge. His eyes took on a glaze as he continued.

"Yes, now. Consider it as my birthday present."

"U-uhâ€¦alright. If it's your birthday pres-" He didn't let her finish. In one swift motion, he captured her lips with his.

With the moon as their only witness, the two shared many sweet and passionate kisses.

"You're mine, Chizuru," he claimed in between kisses. "Finally, you're all mine."

"And y-you're mine too," Chizuru managed to say, albeit

breathlessly.

It might just have been her, but Chizuru thought she felt Chikage smile in every kiss he gave her that evening.

\* \* \*

><p>Thanks for reading! Next chapter's the epilogue!<p>

...Damn it, it's so cheesy. D;

When I was typing "Shut it, Shiranui, or I'll kick you out," I typed "Shut it, Shiranui, or I'll cake you out" instead... :\ Hm, imagine that. Kazama throwing a cake on Shiranui's face. Brilliant. Just brilliant.

## Responses

Dear **\*\*AnimeAishiteru\*\***: You're welcome. ^^ I actually try to mention everyone, but it's just that sometimes I upload the responses after I upload the next chapter (whereas I would usually upload them at the same time), so you don't get to read the responses I make when you read the chapter. Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts with me! I'm so glad you're excited! ^^

Dear **\*\*Stalianha\*\***: Haha, you know me. :) Kaoru will show up a little in the epilogue, but mostly in the second season ('cause ya know, there will be a second season :)) Same, except I suck at all games. I don't mind watching people play them though. Well, I'm glad it worked. :) Thank you for your continuous support!

Dear **\*\*chikage38\*\***: Thank you! My day school exams aren't until the end of June, but I've been busy with my language exams. I'm done the written exams, but I still have the oral exams to do. Thank you for your support though! I'm glad you like them! Haha, sadly we won't be able to see their wedding and honeymoon (at least not in this season of the series).

~~~Thank you for reviewing!

## 30. Epilogue

Well, it's almost been a year guys. ^^ I'm so thankful for all you guys have done for me! You've read through my terrible writing and shared your opinions! I'm really grateful! This is it: the last chapter. It's more of an epilogue, but I hope you'll enjoy it!

**\*\*Read below for details on a second season and a spin-off.**  
**\*\***

**\*\*Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki.\*\***

\* \* \*

><p>After Kazama's birthday banquet, Chizuru found that she was getting a lot of attention at school â€"even more than she was already getting. Not only was she the only known member of the main Yukimura family, but she was also Kazama Chikage's fianc e. It was

big news for the whole school. Though other than that, her daily routine hasn't changed by much. Every day, it was go to school, then come back and work as Chikage's personal maid.<p>

She still worked as the school council's secretary. The only thing different about the council now was that Shiranui's constantly going on about how his "husband" is cheating on him with his "daughter."

Chikage lets her eat with her friends now, so she spends every lunch break with Heisuke, Saitou, Okita, and Yamazaki. Though they've been through a lot, Chizuru feels that she's closer than ever with them.

She's been contacting Risa, her friend from middle school, again. They've been meeting up now and then, and she's been telling Risa all about her new life with Chikage. Thanks to the news, Risa's been pretty updated on everything that's happened at the banquet, so it didn't take very long to tell her the whole story. She also told Risa about Sen, and how she had helped her. Chizuru made a commitment to let the two meet one day. Surely, they would get along.

Sen visits every now and then, and just recently, she introduced her new fianc   to Chizuru. She could tell that Sen really loved this man. In fact, he was her original fianc   until the collapse of the Yukimura family, in which Chikage then had to be engaged to Sen.

And Chikage's mother? She's been nicer lately. A lot nicer. Although she isn't the nicest she can be, it was a big change from the attitude she had given her in the beginning. Now, his mother has accepted her, and she even entrusts some personal tasks to her once in a while. Of course, once Chikage figures this out, he would try to get her out of it. He hated having his personal maid obeying others.

And of course, Chikage's still Chikage. He's been a lot busier lately though, since it's been determined that he would be the next heir. Since he presented himself in front of everyone so early, his father decided to start getting him used to the work world. He disappears once in a while, but he would always come back, reassuring Chizuru that the work was easy. She worried whether he overworked himself sometimes, but he would always tell her that he was fine. Today was one of the days that Chikage came back after a short absence.

"Welcome back," Chizuru greeted warmly and bowed traditionally.

"I'm back."

"How was work?"

"I wasn't at work today," he replied mischievously, taking off his jacket. He handed it to Chizuru who took it accordingly.

"Then where were you? You weren't skipping, were you?"

"I didn't have work today. I went out."

"With who?"



One thing that Chikage figured out about Chizuru was that she got jealous really easily. If what happened with Shizuka wasn't enough proof, this would be.

"Are you jealous?"

"N-n-no," she stammered, turning her back on him.

And she was pretty darn stubborn about it too.

He chuckled in his deep voice and crept up behind her. "I went to buy you something." She spun around quickly.

"You bought me something? What is it?"

He smirked. One reason he loved buying her gifts was because he loved seeing her excitement. It was adorable, in his opinion. "This." He took out a package from the bag he was holding.

Whatever he had bought for her was wrapped in pink cherry blossom designed wrapping paper. It brought a tingling sense of nostalgia to Chizuru and she smiled. Tears were forming in her eyes, but her smile did not waver.

"Are you crying?" Chikage asked with a hint of panic barely audible in his voice. To any other person, this slight emotion would have passed by without being noticed, but to Chizuru, the emotion in his voice was recognized.

"Yeah, but they're tears of joy," she grinned. "I love it. Thank you."

"You didn't even open it yet," he said, half confused and half amused.

"It's the thought that counts," she said reassuringly. She stood on her tippy toes and pecked him lightly on the cheek. "Thank you."

Chikage was caught by surprise, but more than that, he was blushing. \_The \_Kazama Chikage was blushing â€" \_blushing\_! He looked away abruptly and hid his face with a hand. "Don't look," he muttered.

Chizuru giggled. "Sure, sure."

"Don't look," he demanded again, the blush on his face turning even redder.

Chizuru laughed again. She had a feeling that living with this demon from now on will be a lot of fun.

\* \* \*

><p>"What? They're engaged again?" a boy with brown hair and matching eyes asked hastily.<p>

"Y-yes, I saw with my own t-two eyes. H-he proposed to her on stage," Shizuka replied, fear evident in her voice.

"You useless! What kind of sister are you?" the boy raged.

"Not your real one, that's for sure," she mumbled to herself.

"What was that?"

"Nothing!" she shrieked.

"Whatever, you're useless to me now. You can't even do a single thing right. I'll take action from here on."

"W-what are you going to do?" Shizuka asked for fear of what he would do.

"I'm going to pay a little visit to my beloved, little sister. My real one, that is."

"But Kaoru! If you do that, your parents will-"

"Don't tell me what to do, Shizuka. You can't stop me."

"Iâ€¦I'm sorry."

The boy, Kaoru, laughed maniacally. Then just as abruptly as he had started, he stopped, but his sinister sneer did not go away.

\_I have your parents â€¦Now what are you going to do, dearest Chizuru?\_

\* \* \*

><p>Thank you for reading up until now! Read below for more information on a second season and a spin-off oneshot...<br>\*\*

>Author's Note:<span>\*\*

**\*\*Second Season\*\***

Title: Engaged to a Demon

Genres: Romance, Parody, Family

Rating: T

Summary: Chizuru has all her memories and her engagement back. So all's good, right? Not! Now, Chizuru's brother is back and he seems to disapprove her engagement with Chikage even more than his mother ever did. What will poor Chizuru do now? And what about her parents? What do they have to do with this brother of hers?

**\*\*Spin-Off\*\***

Release Date: TBD

It seems that a lot of you guys like Okita. :) So, as fan service I guess, I've decided to write a spin off oneshot for this series. It will feature Okita and Chizuru.

Title: Undetermined.

Genres: Romance

Rating: T

Summary: Coming Soon

Responses

End  
file.